THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COLLINS.

WITH THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

O Thou! by Nature taught
To breathe her genuine thought
In numbers warmly pure and sweetly strong----
O chaste unboastful Nymph! to thee I call----
O sister meek of Truth!
To my admiring youth
Thy sober aid and native charms infuse----
Tho' taste, tho' genius, bless
To some divine excess,
Faint's the cold work till thou inspire the whole----
Thou, only thou, canst raise the meeting soul----
I only seek to find thy temp'rate vale,
Where oft' my reed might sound
To maids and shepherds round,
And all thy sons, O Nature! learn my tale.

ODE TO SIMPLICITY.

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THE PRINCE OF WALES.
1787.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COLLINS.

CONTAINING HIS

MISCELLANIES, ORIENTAL ECLOGUES, ODES DESCRIPTIVE AND ALLEGORICAL,

&c. &c. &c.

Come, Pity! come; by Fancy's aid
Ev'n now my thoughts, relenting Maid!
Thy temple's pride design------
There Picture's toils shall well relate
How Chance or hard involving Fate
O'er mortal bliss prevail:
The buskin'd Muse shall near her stand,
And, sighing, prompt her tender hand
With each disastrous tale.
There let me oft', retir'd by day,
In dreams of passion melt away,
Allow'd with thee to dwell;
There waste the mournful lamp of night
Till, Virgin! thou again delight
To hear a British shell.

ODE TO PITY.

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THE LIFE OF

WILLIAM COLLINS.

THE enthusiasm of poetry, like that of religion, has frequently a powerful influence on the conduct of life, and either throws it into the retreat of uniform obscurity, or marks it with irregularities that lead to misery and disquiet. The gifts of imagination bring the heaviest task upon the vigilance of reason; and to bear those faculties with unerring rectitude or invariable propriety, requires a degree of firmness and of cool attention which doth not always attend the higher gifts of the mind. Yet difficult as Nature herself seems to have rendered the task of regularity to Genius, it is the supreme consolation of Dulness and of Folly to point, with Gothick triumph, to those excesses which are the overflowings of faculties they never enjoyed. Perfectly unconscious that they are indebted to their stupidity for the consistency of their conduct, they plume themselves on an imaginary virtue, which has its origin in what is really their disgrace.—Let such, if such dare approach the shrine of Collins, withdraw to a respectful distance, and, should they behold the ruins of Genius, or the weakness of an exalted mind, let them be taught to lament that Nature has left the noblest of her works imperfect.

Of such men of genius as have borne no publick character it seldom happens that any memoirs can be collected of consequence enough to be recorded by the biographer. If their lives pass in obscurity, they are generally too uniform to engage our attention; if they cultivate and obtain popularity, Envy and Malignity will mingle their poison with the draughts of praise; and through the industry of those unwearied fiends their reputation will be so chequered, and their character so much disguised, that it shall become difficult for the historian to separate truth from falsehood.

Of our exalted Poet, whose life, though far from being popular, did not altogether pass in privacy, we meet with few other accounts than such as the life of every man will afford, *viz.* when he was born, where he was educated, and where he died; yet even these simple Memoirs of the Man will not be unacceptable to those who admire the Poet; for we never receive pleasure without a desire to be acquainted with the source from whence it springs; a species of curiosity which, as it seems to be instinctive, was probably given us for the noble end of gratitude, and, finally, to elevate the enquirers of the mind to that Fountain of Perfection from which all human excellence is derived.

Chichester, a city in Sussex, had the honour of giving birth to the Author of the following poems about the year 1721. His father, who was a repu-

table tradesman in that city*, intended him for the service of the church, and with this view, in the year 1733, he was admitted a scholar of that illustrious seminary of genius and learning, Winchester College, where so many distinguished men of letters, so many excellent poets, have received their classical education. Here he had the good fortune to continue seven years under the care of the very learned Dr. Burton, and at the age of nineteen, in the year 1740, he had merit sufficient to procure a distinguished place in the list of those scholars who are elected upon the foundation of Winchester to New College in Oxford; but as there were then no vacancies in that society, he was admitted a Commoner of Queen's College in the same university, where he continued till July 1741, when he was elected a Demy of Magdalen College. During his residence at Queen's he was at once distinguished for genius and indolence, his exercises, when he could be prevailed upon to write, bearing the visible characteristicks of both. This remiss and inattentive habit might probably arise, in some measure, from disappointment: he had no doubt indulged very high ideas of the academical mode of education, and when he found Science within the fetters of Logic and of Aristotle, it was no wonder if he abated of his diligence to seek her where the search was attended with artificial per-

* He was a hatter.

plexities, and where at last the pursuer would grasp the shadow for the substance.

While he was at Magdalen College he applied himself chiefly to the cultivation of poetry, and wrote the Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer, and the Oriental Eclogues, which in the year 1742 were first published under the title of Persian Eclogues. The success of these poems was far from being equal to their merit; but to a novice in the pursuit of fame the least encouragement is sufficient: if he does not at once acquire that reputation to which his merit entitles him, he embraces the encomiums of the few, forgives the many, and intends to open their eyes to the striking beauties of his next publication.

With prospects such as these probably Mr. Collins indulged his fancy, when in the year 1743 or 1744, after having taken the degree of a Bachelor of Arts, he left the university, and removed to London.

To a man of small fortune, a liberal spirit, and uncertain dependencies, the metropolis is a very dangerous place. Mr. Collins had not been long in Town before he became an instance of the truth of this observation. His pecuniary resources were exhausted, and to restore them by the exertion of genius and learning, though he wanted not the power, he had neither steadiness nor industry. His necessities, indeed, sometimes carried him as far as a scheme or a titlepage for a book; but

whether it were the power of Dissipation or the genius of Repose that interfered, he could proceed no farther. Several books were projected which he was very able to execute, and he became in idea an historian, a critick, and a dramatick poet, by turns. At one time he determined to write an history of the revival of letters *; at another to translate and comment upon Aristotle's Poetics †; then he turned his thoughts to the drama, and proceeded so far towards a tragedy—as to become acquainted with the manager.

Under this unaccountable dissipation he suffered the greatest inconveniencies. Day succeeded day for the support of which he had made no provision, and in which he was to subsist either by the long-repeated contributions of a friend, or the generosity of a casual acquaintance. Yet indolence triumphed at once over want and shame, and neither the anxieties of poverty nor the heart-burning of dependence had power to animate Resolution to perseverance.

As there is a degree of depravity into which if a man falls he becomes incapable of attending to any of the ordinary means that recall men to virtue, so there are some circumstances of indigence so

* For this intended work he published proposals.

† He undertook a translation of Aristotle's Poetics with a large Commentary, and received from the booksellers some money on account of the work, which he never finished. The money he repaid.

extremely degrading that they destroy the influences of shame itself, and most spirits are apt to sink under their oppression into a sullen and unambitious despondence.

However, this might be with regard to Mr. Collins, we find that in the year 1746 he had spirit and resolution enough to publish his Odes Descriptive and Allegorical; but the sale was by no means successful: and hence it was that the Author, conceiving a just indignation against a blind and tasteless age, burnt the remaining copies with his own hands.

Allegorical and abstracted poetry was above the taste of those times as much or more than it is of the present. It is in the lower walks, the plain and practical paths of the Muses only, that the generality of men can be entertained; the higher efforts of imagination are above their capacity; and it is no wonder, therefore, if the Odes Descriptive and Allegorical met with few admirers.

Under these circumstances, so mortifying to every just expectation, when neither his wants were relieved nor his reputation extended, he found some consolation in changing the scene, and visiting his uncle Colonel Martin, who was at that time with our army in Flanders. Soon after his arrival the Colonel died, and left him a considerable fortune*.

* About two thousand pounds; a sum which he did not live to exhaust.

Here then we should hope to behold him happy, possessed of independence, and removed from every scene and every monument of his former misery: but Fortune had delayed her favours till they were not worth receiving. His faculties had been so long harassed by anxiety, dissipation, and distress, that he fell into a nervous disorder, which brought with it an unconquerable depression of spirits, and at length reduced the finest understanding to the most deplorable childishness. In the first stages of his disorder he attempted to relieve himself by travel, and passed into France; but the growing malady obliged him to return; and having continued, with short intervals*, in this pitiable state till the year 1756, he died in the arms of a sister at Chichester.

Mr. Collins was in stature somewhat above the middle size; of a brown complexion, keen expressive eyes, and a fixed sedate aspect, which from intense thinking had contracted an habitual frown. His proficiency in letters was greater than could have been expected from his years. He was skilled in the learned languages, and acquainted with the Italian, French, and Spanish. It is observable that none of his poems bear the marks of an amorous disposition, and that he is one of those few

* It seems to have been in one of these intervals that he was visited by an ingenious friend, who tells us he found him with a book in his hand; and being asked what it was, he answered that "he had but one book, but that was the best." It was the New Testament in English.

poets who have sailed to Delphi without touching at Cythera. The allusions of this kind that appear in his Oriental Eclogues were indispensable in that species of poetry; and it is very remarkable that in his Passions, an Ode for Music, love is omitted, though it should have made a principal figure there.

TO MISS AURELIA C——R,

ON HER WEEPING AT HER SISTER'S WEDDING*

CEASE, fair Aurelia! cease to mourn;
Lament not Hannah's happy state:
You may be happy in your turn,
And seize the treasure you regret.

With Love united Hymen stands,
And softly whispers to your charms,
"Meet but your lover in my bands,
"You'll find your sister in his arms."

AN EPISTLE

ADDRESSED TO SIR THOMAS HANMER,

On his Edition of Shakespeare's Works †.

WHILE, born to bring the Muses happier days,
A patriot's hand protects a poet's lays;
While, nurs'd by you, she sees her myrtles bloom
Green and unwither'd o'er his honour'd tomb;
Excuse her doubts if yet she fears to tell
What secret transports in her bosom swell:

* This was Mr. Collins's first production.

† This poem was written by our Author at the university about the time when Sir Thomas Hanmer's pompous edition of Shakespeare was printed at Oxford. If it has not so much merit as the rest of his poems, it has still

With conscious awe she hears the critick's fame,
And blushing hides her wreath at Shakespeare's name,
Hard was the lot those injur'd strains endur'd,
Unown'd by Science, and by years obscur'd:
Fair Fancy wept; and echoing sighs confest
A fix'd despair in every tuneful breast.
Not with more grief th' afflicted swains appear
When wint'ry winds deform the plenteous year;
When ling'ring frosts the ruin'd seats invade
Where Peace resorted and the Graces play'd.

Each rising art by just gradation moves;
Toil builds on toil, and age on age improves:
The Muse alone unequal dealt her rage,
And grac'd with noblest pomp her earliest stage:
Preserv'd thro' time the speaking scenes impart
Each changeful wish of Phædra's tortur'd heart;
Or paint the curse that mark'd the Theban's reign*,
A bed incestuous, and a father slain:
With kind concern our pitying eyes o'erflow,
Trace the sad tale, and own another's woe.

To Rome remov'd, with wit secure to please,
The Comic Sisters kept their native ease.
With jealous fear declining Greece beheld
Her own Menander's art almost excell'd:
But every Muse essay'd to raise in vain
Some labour'd rival of her tragick strain:

more than the subject deserves. The versification is easy and genteel, and the allusions always poetical. The character of the Poet Fletcher, in particular, is very justly drawn in this Epistle.

* The Oedipus of Sophocles.

Ilyssus' laurels, tho' transferr'd with toil, [soil.
Droop'd their fair leaves, nor knew th' unfriendly
As Arts expir'd resistless Dulness rose;
Goths, Priests, or Vandals—all were Learning's foes,
Till Julius * first recall'd each exil'd maid,
And Cosmo own'd them in th' Etrurian shade:
Then deeply skill'd in love's engaging theme,
The soft Provencial pass'd to Arno's stream:
With graceful ease the wanton lyre he strung,
Sweet flow'd the lays—but love was all he sung:
The gay description could not fail to move,
For, led by Nature, all are friends to love.
But Heav'n, still various in its works, decreed
The perfect boast of time should last succeed.
The beauteous union must appear at length
Of Tuscan fancy and Athenian strength;
One greater Muse Eliza's reign adorn,
And even a Shakespeare to her fame be born!
Yet, ah! so bright her morning's opening ray,
In vain our Britain hop'd an equal day!
No second growth the Western Isle could bear,
At once exhausted with too rich a year.
Too nicely Johnson knew the critick's part;
Nature in him was almost lost in art.
Of softer mould the gentle Fletcher came,
The next in order, as the next in name:
With pleas'd attention 'midst his scenes we find
Each glowing thought that warms the female mind;

* Julius II. the immediate predecessor of Leo X.

Each melting sigh and every tender tear,
The lover's wishes, and the virgin's fear.
His every strain the Smiles and Graces own *,
But stronger Shakespeare felt for man alone:
Drawn by his pen, our ruder passions stand
Th' unrivall'd picture of his early hand.
With gradual steps and slow, exacter France †
Saw Art's fair Empire o'er her shores advance;
By length of toil a bright perfection knew,
Correctly bold, and just in all she drew;
Till late Corneille, with Lucan's ‡ spirit fir'd,
Breath'd the free strain, as Rome and he inspir'd;
And classick judgment gain'd to sweet Racine
The temp'rate strength of Maro's chaster line.
But wilder far the British laurel spread,
And wreaths less artful crown our poet's head;
Yet he alone to every scene could give
Th' historian's truth, and bid the manners live.
Wak'd at his call I view, with glad surprise,
Majestic forms of mighty monarchs rise.
There Henry's trumpets spread their loud alarms,
And laurell'd Conquest waits her hero's arms!
Here gentler Edward claims a pitying sigh,
Scarce born to honours, and so soon to die!

* Their characters are thus distinguished by Mr. Dryden.

† About the time of Shakespeare the poet Hardy was in great repute in France. He wrote, according to Fontenelle, six hundred plays. The French poets after him applied themselves in general to the correct improvement of the stage, which was almost totally disregarded by those of our own country, Johnson excepted.

‡ The favourite author of the elder Corneille.

Yet shall thy throne, unhappy Infant! bring
No beam of comfort to the guilty king:
The time shall come when Glo'ster's heart shall
In life's last hours with horrour of the deed; [bleed*
When dreary visions shall at last present,
Thy vengeful image in the midnight tent:
Thy hand unseen the secret death shall bear [spear.
Blunt the weak sword, and break th' oppressive
Where'er we turn, by Fancy charm'd, we find
Some sweet illusion of the cheated mind:
Oft', wild of wing, she calls the soul to rove
With humbler Nature in the rural grove,
Where swains contented own the quiet scene,
And twilight Fairies tread the circled green:
Dress'd by her hand the woods and vallies smile,
And Spring diffusive decks th' enchanted isle.
O, more than all in powerful genius blest,
Come, take thine empire o'er a willing breast!
Whate'er the wounds this youthful heart shall feel,
Thy songs support me, and thy morals heal!
There every thought the poet's warmth may raise,
There native musick dwells in all the lays.
O, might some verse with happiest skill persuade
Expressive Picture to adopt thine aid!
What wondrous draughts might rise from every page!
What other Raphaels charm a distant age!
Methinks ev'n now I view some free design,
Where breathing Nature lives in every line;

* Tempus erit Turno, magno cum optaverit emptum
Intactum pallanta, &c.

Chaste and subdu'd the modest lights decay,
Steal into shades, and mildly melt away.
—And see! where Antony *, in tears approv'd,
Guards the pale relicks of the chief he lov'd:
O'er the cold corse the warrior seems to bend,
Deep sunk in grief, and mourns his murder'd friend!
Still as they press he calls on all around,
Lifts the torn robe, and points the bleeding wound!
But who is he whose brows exalted bear
A wrath impatient, and a fiercer air †?
Awake to all that injur'd worth can feel,
On his own Rome he turns th' avenging steel.
Yet shall not War's insatiate fury fall
(So Heaven ordains it) on the destin'd wall.
See the fond mother 'midst the plaintive train
Hung on his knees, and prostrate on the plain!
Touch'd to the soul, in vain he strives to hide
The son's affection in the Roman's pride:
O'er all the man conflicting passions rise,
Rage grasps the sword, while Pity melts the eyes!
Thus, gen'rous Critick! as thy bard inspires
The sister Arts shall nurse their drooping fires;
Each from his scenes her stores alternate bring,
Blend the fair tints, or wake the vocal string:
Those Sibyl-leaves, the sport of every wind,
(For poets ever were a careless kind)

* See the Tragedy of Julius Cæsar.

† Coriolanus. See Mr. Spencer's Dialogue on the Odyssey.

By thee dispos'd no farther toil demand,
But, just to Nature, own thy forming hand. [known.
So spread o'er Greece th' harmonious whole un-
Ev'n Homer's numbers charm'd by parts alone:
Their own Ulysses scarce had wander'd more,
By winds and waters cast on every shore;
When, rais'd by Fate, some former Hanmer join'd
Each beauteous image of the boundless mind,
And bade, like thee, his Athens ever claim
A fond alliance with the poet's name.

DIRGE IN CYMBELINE *,

Sung by Guiderus and Arviragus over Fidele, Supposed to be dead.

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing spring.

* Mr. Collins had skill to complain: of that mournful melody and those tender images which are the distinguishing excellencies of such pieces as bewail departed friendship or beauty he was an almost unequalled master. He knew perfectly to exhibit such circumstances, peculiar to the objects, as awaken the influences of pity; and while, from his own great sensibility, he felt what he wrote, he naturally addressed himself to the feelings of others.

To read such lines as the following, all beautiful and tender as they are, without corresponding emotions of pity, is surely impossible;

The tender thought on thee shall dwell:
Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
For thee the tear be duly shed;
Belov'd till life can charm no more,
And mourn'd till Pity's self be dead.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove,
But shepherd-lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

No wither'd witch shall here be seen,
No goblins lead their nightly crew;
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew.

The red-breast oft' at evening hours
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss and gather'd flow'rs
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds and beating rain
In tempests shake the sylvan cell,
Or 'midst the chase, on every plain
The tender thought on thee shall dwell:

Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
For thee the tear be duly shed;
Belov'd till life can charm no more,
And mourn'd till Pity's self be dead.

VERSES

Written on a Paper which contained a piece of Bride-cake.

Ye curious hands that, hid from vulgar eyes,
By search profane shall find this hallow'd Cake,
With virtue's awe forbear the sacred prize,
Nor dare a theft for love and pity's sake!

This precious relick, form'd by magick pow'r,
Beneath the shepherd's haunted pillow laid,
Was meant by Love to charm the silent hour,
The secret present of a matchless maid.

The Cyprian queen at Hymen's fond request
Each nice ingredient chose with happiest art;
Fears, sighs, and wishes of th' enamour'd breast,
And pains that please, are mix'd in every part.

With rosy hand the spicy fruit she brought
From Paphian hills and fair Cythera's isle,
And temper'd sweet with these the melting thought,
The kiss ambrosial, and the yielding smile.

Ambiguous looks, that scorn and yet relent,
Denials mild, and firm unalter'd truth,
Reluctant pride, and am'rous faint consent,
And meeting ardours, and exulting youth.

Sleep, wayward God! hath sworn while these remain
With flatt'ring dreams to dry his nightly tear,
And cheerful Hope, so oft' invok'd in vain,
With Fairy songs shall sooth his pensive ear.

If, bound by vows to Friendship's gentle side,
And, fond of soul, thou hop'st an equal grace;
If youth or maid thy joys and griefs divide,
O, much entreated, leave this fatal place!

Sweet Peace, who long hath shun'd my plaintive day,
Consents at length to bring me short delight;
Thy careless steps may scare her doves away,
And Grief with raven note usurp the night.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE ORIENTAL ECLOGUES.

THE genius of the Pastoral, as well as of every other respectable species of poetry, had its origin in the East, and from thence was transplanted by the Muses of Greece; but whether from the continent of the Lesser Asia, or from Egypt, which about the era of the Grecian Pastoral was the hospitable nurse of letters, it is not easy to determine. From the subjects and the manner of Theocritus one would incline to the latter opinion, while the history of Bion is in favour of the former.

However, though it should still remain a doubt through what channel the Pastoral travelled westward, there is not the least shadow of uncertainty concerning its oriental origin.

In those ages which, guided by sacred chronology, from a comparative view of time we call the Early Ages, it appears from the most authentick historians that the chiefs of the people employed themselves in rural exercises, and that astronomers and legislators were at the same time shepherds. Thus Strabo informs us that the history of the creation was communicated to the Egyptians by a Chaldean shepherd.

From these circumstances it is evident not only that such shepherds were capable of all the dignity

and elegance peculiar to poetry, but that whatever poetry they attempted would be of the Pastoral kind, would take its subjects from those scenes of rural simplicity in which they were conversant, and, as it was the offspring of Harmony and Nature, would employ the powers it derived from the former to celebrate the beauty and benevolence of the latter.

Accordingly we find that the most ancient poems treat of agriculture, astronomy, and other objects within the rural and natural systems.

What constitutes the difference between the Georgic and the Pastoral is love, and the colloquial or dramatick form of composition peculiar to the latter: this form of composition is sometimes dispensed with, and love and rural imagery alone are thought sufficient to distinguish the Pastoral. The tender passion, however, seems to be essential to this species of poetry, and is hardly ever excluded from those pieces that were intended to come under this denomination: even in those eclogues of the Amœbean kind, whose only purport is a trial of skill between contending shepherds, love has its usual share, and the praises of their respective mistresses are the general subjects of the competitors.

It is to be lamented that scarce any oriental compositions of this kind have survived the ravages of Ignorance, Tyranny, and Time: we cannot doubt that many such have been extant, possibly as far down as that fatal period, never to be mentioned

in the world of letters without horrour, when the glorious monuments of human ingenuity perished in the ashes of the Alexandrian library.

Those ingenious Greeks, whom we call the Parents of Pastoral poetry, were probably no more than imitators of imitators, that derived their harmony from higher and remoter sources, and kindled their poetical fires at those then unextinguished lamps which burned within the tombs of oriental genius.

It is evident that Homer has availed himself of those magnificent images and descriptions so frequently to be met with in the books of the Old Testament; and why may not Theocritus, Moschus, and Bion, have found their archetypes in other eastern writers whose names have perished with their works? yet though it may not be illiberal to admit such a supposition, it would certainly be invidious to conclude, what the malignity of cavillers alone could suggest with regard to Homer, that they destroyed the sources from which they borrowed, and, as it is fabled of the young of the pelican, drained their supporters to death.

As the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament was performed at the request, and under the patronage, of Ptolemy Philadelphus, it were not to be wondered if Theocritus, who was entertained at that prince's court, had borrowed some part of his Pastoral imagery from the poetical passages of those books.—I think it can hardly be doubted that the Sicilian poet had in his eye certain expressions of

the prophet Isaiah when he wrote the following lines;

Νυν ια μεν φορεοιτε βατοι, φορεοιτε δ' ακανθαι·
Ἁ δε καλα ναρκισσος επ' αρκευθοισι κομασαι·
Παντα δ' εναλλα γενοιτο, και ἁ πιτυς ὀχνας ενεικαι
———και τως κυνας ὡλαφος ἑλκοι.

Let vexing brambles the blue violet bear,
On the rude thorn Narcissus dress his hair—
All, all revers'd—The pine with pears be crown'd,
And the bold deer shall drag the trembling hound.

The cause, indeed, of these phenomena is very different in the Greek from what it is in the Hebrew poet; the former employing them on the death, the latter on the birth, of an important person; but the marks of imitation are nevertheless obvious.

It might however be expected, that if Theocritus had borrowed at all from the sacred writers, the celebrated Pastoral epithalamium of Solomon, so much within his own walk of poetry, would not certainly have escaped his notice. His epithalamium on the marriage of Helena, moreover, gave him an open field for imitation; therefore if he has any obligations to the royal bard we may expect to find them there. The very opening of the poem is in the spirit of the Hebrew song;

Ουτω δε πρωϊζα κατεδραθες, ω φιλε γαμβρε.

The colour of imitation is still stronger in the following passage;

But what did most this faithful heart surprise,
She boasted that her skill could set it free;
This faithful heart the boasted freedom flies:
How could it venture to abandon thee?

ELEGY VI*.

He adjures Delia to pity him by their Friendship with Cælia, who was lately dead.

THOUSANDS would seek the lasting peace of death,
And in that harbour shun the storm of care;
Officious Hope still holds the fleeting breath;
She tells them still—To-morrow will be fair.

She tells me, Delia, I shall thee obtain;
But can I listen to her Syren song,
Who sev'n slow months have dragg'd my painful chain,
So long thy lover, and despis'd so long?

By all the joys thy dearest Cælia gave,
Let not her once-lov'd friend unpity'd burn;
So may her ashes find a peaceful grave,
And sleep uninjur'd in their sacred urn.

To her I first avow'd my tim'rous flame;
She nurs'd my hopes, and taught me how to sue:
She still would pity what the wise might blame,
And feel for weakness which she never knew.

* Almost all the materials of this Elegy may be found in Tibullus, B. II. El. vi.

Ah! do not grieve the dear lamented shade
That, hov'ring round us, all my suff'rings hears!
She is my saint—to her my pray'rs are made,
With oft' repeated gifts of flow'rs and tears.

To her sad tomb at midnight I retire,
And lonely sitting by the silent stone,
I tell it all the griefs my wrongs inspire;
The marble image seems to hear my moan.

Thy friend's pale ghost shall vex thy sleepless bed,
And stand before thee all in virgin white:
That ruthless bosom will disturb the dead,
And call forth pity from eternal night.

"Cease, cruel Man! the mournful theme forbear;
"Tho' much thou suffer, to thyself complain:
"Ah! to recal the sad remembrance spare;
"One tear from her is more than all thy pain."

ELEGY VII*.

On Delia's being in the Country, where he supposes she stays to see the Harvest.

Now Delia breathes in woods the fragrant air,
Dull are the hearts that still in Town remain;
Venus herself attends on Delia there,
And Cupid sports amid the sylvan train.

* Consult Tibullus, B. II. El. iii. B. I. El. i. B. II. El. ii.

he represents them as the daughters of Truth and Wisdom.

The characteristicks of Modesty and Chastity are extremely happy and *peinturesque*;

> Come thou, whose thoughts as limpid springs are clear;
> To lead the train, sweet Modesty! appear:
> With thee be Chastity, of all afraid,
> Distrusting all, a wise, suspicious maid;
> Cold is her breast, like flow'rs that drink the dew,
> A silken veil conceals her from the view.

The two similies borrowed from rural objects are not only much in character, but perfectly natural and expressive. There is, notwithstanding, this defect in the former, that it wants a peculiar propriety; for purity of thought may as well be applied to Chastity as to Modesty; and from this instance, as well as from a thousand more, we may see the necessity of distinguishing, in characteristick poetry, every object by marks and attributes peculiarly its own.

It cannot be objected to this eclogue that it wants both those essential *criteria* of the Pastoral, love and the drama; for though it partakes not of the latter, the former still retains an interest in it, and that too very material, as it professedly consults the virtue and happiness of the lover, while it informs what are the qualities

> —— that must lead to love.

ECLOGUE II.

All the advantages that any species of poetry can derive from the novelty of the subject and scenery this eclogue possesses. The rout of a camel-driver is a scene that scarce could exist in the imagination of an European, and of its attendant distresses he could have no idea.—These are very happily and minutely painted by our descriptive Poet. What sublime simplicity of expression! what nervous plainness in the opening of the poem!

> In silent horrour o'er the boundless waste
> The driver Hassan with his camels past.

The magick pencil of the Poet brings the whole scene before us at once, as it were by enchantment, and in this single couplet we feel all the effect that arises from the terrible wildness of a region unenlivened by the habitations of men. The verses that describe so minutely the camel-driver's little provisions have a touching influence on the imagination, and prepare the reader to enter more feelingly into his future apprehensions of distress;

> Bethink thee, Hassan! where shall Thirst assuage,
> When fails this cruise, his unrelenting rage?

It is difficult to say whether his apostrophe to the mute companions of his toils is more to be admired for the elegance and beauty of the poetical imagery, or for the tenderness and humanity of the sentiment. He who can read it without being affect-

ed, will do his heart no injustice if he concludes it to be destitute of sensibility;

Ye mute Companions of my toils, that bear
In all my griefs a more than equal share!
Here, where no springs in murmurs break away,
Or moss-crown'd fountains mitigate the day,
In vain ye hope the green delights to know
Which plains more blest or verdant vales bestow;
Here rocks alone and tasteless sands are found,
And faint and sickly winds for ever howl around.

Yet in these beautiful lines there is a slight error which writers of the greatest genius very frequently fall into.—It will be needless to observe to the accurate reader, that in the fifth and sixth verses there is a verbal pleonasm where the Poet speaks of the *green* delights of *verdant* vales. There is an oversight of the same kind in The Manners, an Ode, where the Poet says,

—— Seine's *blue* nymphs deplore
In *watchet* weeds——

This fault is indeed a common one, but to a reader of taste it is nevertheless disgustful; and it is mentioned here as the error of a man of genius and judgment, that men of genius and judgment may guard against it.

Mr. Collins speaks like a true poet, as well in sentiment as expression, when, with regard to the thirst of wealth, he says,

Why heed we not, while mad we haste along,
The gentle voice of Peace, or Pleasure's song?

Or wherefore think the flow'ry mountain's side,
The fountain's murmurs, and the valley's pride;
Why think we these less pleasing to behold
Than dreary deserts, if they lead to gold?

But however just these sentiments may appear to those who have not revolted from nature and simplicity, had the Author proclaimed them in Lombard-street or Cheapside he would not have been complimented with the understanding of the bellman.—A striking proof that our own particular ideas of happiness regulate our opinions concerning the sense and wisdom of others!

It is impossible to take leave of this most beautiful eclogue without paying the tribute of admiration so justly due to the following nervous lines;

What if the lion in his rage I meet!——
Oft in the dust I view his printed feet;
And fearful oft', when Day's declining light
Yields her pale empire to the mourner Night;
By hunger rouz'd he scours the groaning plain,
Gaunt wolves and sullen tigers in his train;
Before them Death with shrieks directs their way,
Fills the wild yell, and leads them to their prey.

This, amongst many other passages to be met with in the writings of Collins, shews that his genius was perfectly capable of the grand and magnificent in description, notwithstanding what a learned writer has advanced to the contrary. Nothing, certainly, could be more greatly conceived, or more

adequately expressed, than the image in the last couplet.

That deception, sometimes used in rhetorick and poetry, which presents us with an object or sentiment contrary to what we expected, is here introduced to the greatest advantage;

Farewell the youth whom sighs could not detain,
Whom Zara's breaking heart implor'd in vain!
Yet as thou go'st may every blast arise
Weak and unfelt as these rejected sighs!

But this, perhaps, is rather an artificial prettiness than a real or natural beauty.

ECLOGUE III.

THAT innocence and native simplicity of manners which, in the first eclogue, was allowed to constitute the happiness of love, is here beautifully described in its effects. The Sultan of Persia marries a Georgian shepherdess, and finds in her embraces that genuine felicity which unperverted nature alone can bestow. The most natural and beautiful parts of this eclogue are those where the fair Sultana refers with so much pleasure to her Pastoral amusements, and those scenes of happy innocence in which she had passed her early years; particularly when, upon her first departure,

Oft' as she went she backward turn'd her view,
And bade that crook and bleating flock adieu.

This picture of amiable simplicity reminds one of

that passage where Proserpine, when carried off by Pluto, regrets the loss of the flowers she had been gathering;

> Collecti flores tunicis cecidere remissis:
> Tantaque simplicitas puerilibus adfuit annis,
> Hæc quoque virgineum movit jactura dolorem.

ECLOGUE IV.

THE beautiful but unfortunate country where the scene of this pathetick eclogue is laid had been recently torn in pieces by the depredations of its savage neighbours, when Mr. Collins so affectingly described its misfortunes. This ingenious man had not only a pencil to pourtray but a heart to feel for the miseries of mankind; and it is with the utmost tenderness and humanity he enters into the narrative of Circassia's ruin, while he realizes the scene, and brings the present drama before us. Of every circumstance that could possibly contribute to the tender effect this Pastoral was designed to produce the Poet has availed himself with the utmost art and address. Thus he prepares the heart to pity the distresses of Circassia, by representing it as the scene of the happiest love;

> In fair Circassia, where, to love inclin'd,
> Each swain was blest, for every maid was kind.

To give the circumstances of the dialogue a more affecting solemnity, he makes the time midnight, and describes the two shepherds in the very act of

flight from the destruction that swept over their country;

> Sad o'er the dews two brother shepherds fled,
> Where wild'ring Fear and desp'rate Sorrow led.

There is beauty and propriety in the epithet *wild'ring*, which strikes us more forcibly the more we consider it.

The opening of the dialogue is equally happy, natural, and unaffected, when one of the shepherds, weary and overcome with the fatigue of flight, calls upon his companion to review the length of way they had passed. This is certainly painting from nature, and the thoughts, however obvious, or destitute of refinement, are perfectly in character. But as the closest pursuit of nature is the surest way to excellence in general, and to sublimity in particular, in poetical description, so we find that this simple suggestion of the shepherd is not unattended with magnificence: there is grandeur and variety in the landscape he describes;

> And first review that long-extended plain,
> And yon wide groves, already past with pain;
> Yon' ragged cliff, whose dang'rous path we try'd,
> And last this lofty mountain's weary side.

There is, in imitative harmony, an act of expressing a slow and difficult movement by adding to the usual number of pauses in a verse. This is observable in the line that describes the ascent of the mountain;

> And last || this lofty mountain's || weary side ||.

Here we find the number of pauses, or musical bars, which in an heroic verse is commonly two, increased to three.

The liquid melody and the numerous sweetness of expression in the following descriptive lines is almost inimitably beautiful;

> Sweet to the sight is Zabran's flow'ry plain,
> And once by nymphs and shepherds lov'd in vain.
> No more the virgins shall delight to rove
> By Sargis' banks or Irwan's shady grove;
> On Tarkie's mountain catch the cooling gale,
> Or breathe the sweets of Aly's flow'ry vale.

Nevertheless in this delightful landscape there is an obvious fault; there is no distinction between the plain of Zabran and the vale of Aly; they are both flowery, and consequently undiversified. This could not proceed from the Poet's want of judgment, but from inattention: it had not occurred to him that he had employed the epithet *flow'ry* twice within so short a compass; an oversight which those who are accustomed to poetical, or indeed to any other species of composition, know to be very possible.

Nothing can be more beautifully conceived, or more pathetically expressed, than the shepherd's apprehensions for his fair countrywomen, exposed to the ravages of the invaders;

> In vain Circassia boasts her spicy groves,
> For ever fam'd for pure and happy loves;
> In vain she boasts her fairest of the fair,
> Their eyes' blue languish, and their golden hair:

Those eyes in tears their fruitless grief shall send;
Those hairs the Tartar's cruel hand shall rend.

There is certainly some very powerful charm in the liquid melody of sounds. The editor of these poems could never read or hear the following verse repeated without a degree of pleasure otherwise entirely unaccountable;

Their eyes' *blue languish*, and their *golden hair*.

Such are the Oriental Eclogues, which we leave with the same kind of anxious pleasure we feel upon a temporary parting with a beloved friend.

ORIENTAL ECLOGUES.

ECLOGUE I.

SELIM; OR, THE SHEPHERD'S MORAL.

Scene, A Valley near Bagdat. Time, The Morning.

YE Persian Maids! attend your poet's lays,
And hear how shepherds pass their golden days.
Not all are blest whom Fortune's hand sustains
With wealth in courts, nor all that haunt the plains:
Well may your hearts believe the truths I tell;
'Tis virtue makes the bliss where'er we dwell.
Thus Selim sung, by sacred truth inspir'd,
Nor praise but such as truth bestow'd desir'd:
Wise in himself, his meaning songs convey'd
Informing morals to the shepherd-maid,
Or taught the swains that surest bliss to find,
What groves nor streams bestow, a virtuous mind.
When sweet, and blushing like a virgin bride,
The radiant Morn resum'd her orient pride;
When wanton gales along the vallies play,
Breathe on each flow'r, and bear their sweets away,
By Tigris' wand'ring waves he sat and sung,
This useful lesson for the fair and young.
"Ye Persian Dames! he said, "to you belong,
"Well may they please! the morals of my song:

"No fairer maids, I trust, than you are found,
"Grac'd with soft arts, the peopled world around!
"The Morn that lights you, to your loves supplies
"Each gentler ray, delicious to your eyes:
"For you those flow'rs her fragrant hands bestow,
"And yours the love that kings delight to know:
"Yet think not these, all beauteous as they are,
"The best kind blessings Heav'n can grant the fair.
"Who trust alone in beauty's feeble ray
"Boast but the worth Bassora's pearls display;
"Drawn from the deep we own their surface bright,
"But, dark within, they drink no lustrous light.
"Such are the maids, and such the charms they
"By sense unaided, or to virtue lost. [boast,
"Self-flatt'ring Sex! your hearts believe in vain
"That Love shall blind when once he fires the
"Or hope a lover by your faults to win, [swain;
"As spots on ermine beautify the skin.
"Who seeks secure to rule, be first her care
"Each softer virtue that adorns the fair:
"Each tender passion man delights to find,
"The lov'd perfections of a female mind. [reign,
"Bless'd were the days when Wisdom held her
"And shepherds sought her on the silent plain;
"With Truth she wedded in the secret grove,
"Immortal Truth! and daughters bless'd their love.
"O haste, fair Maids! ye Virtues! come away,
"Sweet Peace and Plenty lead you on your way!
"The balmy shrub for you shall love our shore,
"By Ind excell'd or Araby no more.

"Lost to our fields, for so the Fates ordain,
"The dear deserters shall return again.
"Come thou, whose thoughts as limpid springs are
"To lead the train, sweet Modesty! appear: [clear;
"Here make thy court amidst our rural scene,
"And shepherd-girls shall own thee for their queen.
"With thee be Chastity, of all afraid,
"Distrusting all, a wise, suspicious maid;
"But man the most—not more the mountain doe
"Holds the swift faulcon for her deadly foe.
"Cold is her breast, like flow'rs that drink the dew,
"A silken veil conceals her from the view.
"No wild desires amidst thy train be known,
"But Faith, whose heart is fix'd on one alone;
"Desponding Meekness, with her downcast eyes,
"And friendly Pity, full of tender sighs;
"And Love the last: by these your hearts approve;
"These are the Virtues that must lead to love."
 Thus sung the swain, and ancient legends say
The maids of Bagdat verify'd the lay.
Dear to the plains, the Virtues came along,
The shepherds lov'd, and Selim bless'd his song.

ECLOGUE II.

HASSAN; OR, THE CAMEL-DRIVER.

Scene, The Desert. Time, Mid-day.

In silent horrour o'er the boundless waste
The driver Hassan with his camels past;

One cruise of water on his back he bore,
And his light scrip contain'd a scanty store;
A fan of painted feathers in his hand,
To guard his shaded face from scorching sand.
The sultry sun had gain'd the middle sky,
And not a tree and not an herb was nigh;
The beasts with pain their dusty way pursue,
Shrill roar'd the winds, and dreary was the view!
With desp'rate sorrow wild, th' affrighted man
Thrice sigh'd, thrice struck his breast, and thus began;
"Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
"When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way!
"Ah! little thought I of the blasting wind,
"The thirst or pinching hunger that I find!
"Bethink thee, Hassan! where shall Thirst assuage,
"When fails this cruise, his unrelenting rage?
"Soon shall this scrip its precious load resign,
"Then what but tears and hunger shall be thine?
"Ye mute Companions of my toils, that bear
"In all my griefs a more than equal share!
"Here, where no springs in murmurs break away,
"Or moss-crown'd fountains mitigate the day,
"In vain ye hope the green delights to know
"Which plains more bless'd or verdant vales bestow;
"Here rocks alone and tasteless sands are found,
"And faint and sickly winds for ever howl around.
"Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
"When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way!
"Curs'd be the gold and silver which persuade
"Weak men to follow far fatiguing trade!

" The lily peace outshines the silver store,
" And life is dearer than the golden ore;
" Yet money tempts us o'er the desert brown
" To ev'ry distant mart and wealthy town:
" Full oft' we tempt the land, and oft' the sea;
" And are we only yet repaid by thee?
" Ah! why was ruin so attractive made,
" Or why fond man so easily betray'd?
" Why heed we not, while mad we haste along,
" The gentle voice of Peace, or Pleasure's song?
" Or wherefore think the flow'ry mountain's side,
" The fountain's murmurs, and the valley's pride;
" Why think we these less pleasing to behold
" Than dreary deserts, if they lead to gold?
" Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
" When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way!
" O cease, my Fears!—All frantick as I go,
" When thought creates unnumber'd scenes of woe,
" What if the lion in his rage I meet!——
" Oft' in the dust I view his printed feet;
" And fearful oft', when Day's declining light
" Yields her pale empire to the mourner Night,
" By hunger rous'd he scours the groaning plain,
" Gaunt wolves and sullen tigers in his train;
" Before them Death with shrieks directs their way,
" Fills the wild yell, and leads them to their prey.
" Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
" When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way!
" At that dead hour the silent asp shall creep,
" If aught of rest I find, upon my sleep;

" Or some swoln serpent twist his scales around,
" And wake to anguish with a burning wound.
" Thrice happy they, the wise contented poor,
" From lust of wealth and dread of death secure!
" They tempt no deserts, and no griefs they find;
" Peace rules the day where reason rules the mind.
" Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
" When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way!"
" O, hapless Youth! for she thy love hath won,
" The tender Zara! will be most undone. [maid,
" Big swell'd my heart, and own'd the powerful
" When fast she dropp'd her tears, as thus she said:"
" Farewell the youth whom sighs could not detain,
" Whom Zara's breaking heart implor'd in vain!
" Yet as thou go'st, may every blast arise
" Weak and unfelt as these rejected sighs;
" Safe o'er the wild no perils may'st thou see,
" No griefs endure, nor weep, false Youth! like me."
" O! let me safely to the fair return,
" Say with a kiss she must not, shall not, mourn;
" O! let me teach my heart to lose its fears,
" Recall'd by Wisdom's voice and Zara's tears."
He said, and call'd on Heav'n to bless the day
When back to Schiraz' walls he bent his way.

ECLOGUE III.

ABRA; OR, THE GEORGIAN SULTANA.

Scene, A Forest. Time, The Evening.

In Georgia's land, where Teflis' towers are seen
In distant view along the level green,
While ev'ning dews enrich the glitt'ring glade,
And the tall forests cast a longer shade,
What time 'tis sweet o'er fields of rice to stray,
Or scent the breathing maize at setting day,
Amidst the maids of Zagen's peaceful grove
Emyra sung the pleasing cares of love.
  Of Abra first began the tender strain,
Who led her youth with flocks upon the plain:
At morn she came those willing flocks to lead
Where lilies rear them in th' watry mead;
From early dawn the live-long hours she told,
Till late at silent eve she penn'd the fold.
Deep in the grove, beneath the secret shade,
A various wreath of od'rous flowers she made;
Gay-motley'd pinks and sweet jonquils she chose*,
The violet blue that on the moss-bank grows;
All-sweet to sense, the flaunting rose was there;
The finish'd chaplet well adorn'd her hair.
  Great Abbas chanc'd that fated morn to stray,
By love conducted from the chase away;

* That these flowers are found in very great abundance in some of the provinces of Persia, see the Modern History of Mr. Salmon.

Among the vocal vales he heard her song,
And sought the vales and echoing groves among:
At length he found and woo'd the rural maid;
She knew the monarch, and with fear obey'd.
"Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd,
"And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd!"
The royal lover bore her from the plain,
Yet still her crook and bleating flock remain:
Oft' as she went she backward turn'd her view,
And bade that crook and bleating flock adieu.
Fair happy Maid! to other scenes remove,
To richer scenes of golden power and love!
Go leave the simple pipe and shepherd's strain;
With love delight thee, and with Abbas reign.
"Be every youth like royal, Abbas mov'd,
"And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd!"
Yet midst the blaze of courts she fix'd her love
On the cool fountain or the shady grove;
Still with the shepherd's innocence her mind
To the sweet vale and flow'ry mead inclin'd;
And oft' as Spring renew'd the plains with flow'rs,
Breath'd his soft gales, and led the fragrant Hours,
With sure return she sought the sylvan scene,
The breezy mountains and the forests green.
Her maids around her mov'd, a duteous band!
Each bore a crook all rural in her hand:
Some simple lay of flocks and herds they sung;
With joy the mountain and the forest rung.
"Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd,
"And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd!"

And oft' the royal lover left the care
And thorns of state attendant on the fair;
Oft' to the shades and low-roof'd cots retir'd,
Or sought the vale where first his heart was fir'd.
A russet mantle like a swain he wore,
And thought of crowns and busy courts no more.
"Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd,
"And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd!"
Blest was the life that royal Abbas led;
Sweet was his love, and innocent his bed.
What if in wealth the noble maid excel?
The simple shepherd-girl can love as well.
Let those who rule on Persia's jewell'd throne
Be fam'd for love, and gentlest love alone;
Or wreathe, like Abbas, full of fair renown,
The lover's myrtle with the warrior's crown.
O happy days! the maids around her say;
O haste, profuse of blessings, haste away!
"Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd,
"And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd!"

ECLOGUE IV.

AGIB AND SECANDER; OR, THE FUGITIVES.

Scene, A Mountain in Circassia. Time, Midnight.

In fair Circassia, where, to love inclin'd,
Each swain was blest, for every maid was kind;
At that still hour when awful midnight reigns,
And none but wretches haunt the twilight plains;

What time the moon had hung her lamp on high,
And past in radiance thro' the cloudless sky,
Sad o'er the dews two brother shepherds fled,
Where wild'ring Fear and desp'rate Sorrow led:
Fast as they prest their flight behind them lay
Wild ravag'd plains, and vallies stole away.
Along the mountain's bending sides they ran
Till, faint and weak, Secander thus began:

Secan. O stay thee, Agib! for my feet deny,
No longer friendly to my life, to fly.
Friend of my heart! O turn thee and survey,
Trace our sad flight thro' all its length of way!
And first review that long-extended plain,
And yon' wide groves, already past with pain;
Yon' ragged cliff, whose dang'rous path we try'd,
And last this lofty mountain's weary side.

Agib. Weak as thou art, yet, hapless! must thou know
The toils of flight, or some severer woe.
Still as I haste the Tartar shouts behind,
And shrieks and sorrows load the sadd'ning wind:
In rage of heart, with ruin in his hand,
He blasts our harvests and deforms our land.
Yon' citron grove, whence first in fear we came,
Droops its fair honours to the conq'ring flame:
Far fly the swains, like us, in deep despair,
And leave to ruffian bands their fleecy care.

Secan. Unhappy Land! whose blessings tempt the sword;
In vain, unheard, thou call'st thy Persian Lord!
In vain thou court'st him, helpless, to thine aid,
To shield the shepherd and protect the maid!

Far off, in thoughtless indolence resign'd,
Soft dreams of love and pleasure sooth his mind;
'Midst fair sultanas lost in idle joy,
No wars alarm him, and no fears annoy.
Agib. Yet these green hills in summer's sultry heat
Have lent the monarch oft' a cool retreat.
Sweet to the sight is Zabran's flow'ry plain,
And once by maids and shepherds lov'd in vain!
No more the virgins shall delight to rove
By Sargis' banks or Irwan's shady grove;
On Tarkie's mountain catch the cooling gale,
Or breathe the sweets of Aly's flow'ry vale:
Fair Scenes! but, ah! no more with peace possess'd,
With ease alluring, and with plenty bless'd:
No more the shepherds' whitening tents appear,
Nor the kind products of a bounteous year;
No more the date, with snowy blossoms crown'd,
But Ruin spreads her baleful fires around.
Secan. In vain Circassia boasts her spicy groves,
For ever fam'd for pure and happy loves;
In vain she boasts her fairest of the fair,
Their eyes' blue languish, and their golden hair:
Those eyes in tears their fruitless grief must send;
Those hairs the Tartar's cruel hand shall rend. [far
Agib. Ye Georgian swains! that piteous learn from
Circassia's ruin and the waste of war,
Some weightier arms than crooks and staffs prepare
To shield your harvests and defend your fair:
The Turk and Tartar like designs pursue,
Fix'd to destroy, and stedfast to undo.

Wild as his land, in native deserts bred,
By lust incited, or by malice led,
The villain Arab! as he prowls for prey,
Oft' marks with blood and wasting flames the way;
Yet none so cruel as the Tartar foe,
To death inur'd, and nurst in scenes of woe.
He said; when loud along the vale was heard
A shriller shriek, and nearer fires appear'd;
Th' affrighted shepherds thro' the dews of night
Wide o'er the moonlight hills renew'd their flight.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE ODES DESCRIPTIVE AND ALLEGORICAL.

THE genius of Collins was capable of every degree of excellence in lyrick poetry, and perfectly qualified for that high province of the Muse. Possessed of a native ear for all the varieties of harmony and modulation, susceptible of the finest feelings of tenderness and humanity, but, above all, carried away by that high enthusiasm which gives to imagination its strongest colouring, he was at once capable of soothing the ear with the melody of his numbers, of influencing the passions by the force of his pathos, and of gratifying the fancy by the luxury of his description.

In consequence of these powers, but more particularly in consideration of the last, he chose such subjects for his lyrick essays as were most favourable for the indulgence of description and allegory; where he could exercise his powers in moral and personal painting; where he could exert his invention in conferring new attributes on images or objects already known, and described by a determinate number of characteristicks; where he might give an uncommon eclat to his figures, by placing them in happier attitudes, or in more advantageous lights, and introduce new forms from the moral and intellectual world into the society of impersonated beings.

Such no doubt were the privileges which the Poet expected, and such were the advantages he derived from the descriptive and allegorical nature of his themes.

It seems to have been the whole industry of our Author (and it is at the same time, almost all the claim to moral excellence his writings can boast) to promote the influence of the social virtues, by painting them in the fairest and happiest lights.

Melior fieri tuendo

would be no improper motto to his poems in general, but of his lyrick poems it seems to be the whole moral tendency and effect. If, therefore, it should appear to some readers that he has been more industrious to cultivate description than sentiment, it may be observed that his descriptions themselves are sentimental, and answer the whole end of that species of writing, by embellishing every feature of Virtue, and by conveying through the effects of the pencil the finest moral lessons to the mind.

Horace speaks of the fidelity of the ear in preference to the uncertainty of the eye; but if the mind receives conviction, it is certainly of very little importance through what medium, or by which of the senses, it is conveyed. The impressions left on the imagination may possibly be thought less durable than the deposits of the memory; but it may very well admit of a question whether a conclusion of reason or an impression of imagination will soonest make its way to the heart. A moral precept, con-

veyed in words, is only an account of truth in its effects; a moral picture is truth exemplified; and which is most likely to gain upon the affections it may not be difficult to determine.

This however must be allowed, that those works approach the nearest to perfection which unite these powers and advantages; which at once influence the imagination and engage the memory; the former by the force of animated and striking description; the latter by a brief but harmonious conveyance of precept: thus while the heart is influenced through the operation of the passions or the fancy, the effect, which might otherwise have been transient, is secured by the co-operating power of the memory, which treasures up in a short aphorism the moral of the scene.

This is a good reason, and this perhaps is the only reason that can be given, why our dramatick performances should generally end with a chain of couplets: in these the moral of the whole piece is usually conveyed; and that assistance which the memory borrows from rhyme, as it was probably the original cause of it, gives it usefulness and propriety even there.

After these apologies for the descriptive turn of the following Odes, something remains to be said on the origin and use of allegory in poetical composition.

By this we are not to understand the trope in the schools, which is defined " aliud verbis, aliud sensu

"ostendere," and of which Quintilian says, "usus "est, ut tristi dicamus melioribus verbis, aut bonæ "rei gratia quædam contrariis significemus," *&c.* It is not the verbal but the sentimental allegory, not allegorical expression (which indeed might come under the term of Metaphor), but allegorical imagery, that is here in question.

When we endeavour to trace this species of figurative sentiment to its origin, we find it coeval with literature itself. It is generally agreed that the most ancient productions are poetical, and it is certain that the most ancient poems abound with allegorical imagery.

If, then, it be allowed that the first literary productions were poetical, we shall have little or no difficulty in discovering the origin of allegory.

At the birth of letters, in the transition from hieroglyphical to literal expression, it is not to be wondered if the custom of expressing ideas by personal images, which had so long prevailed, should still retain its influence on the mind, though the use of letters had rendered the practical application of it superfluous. Those who had been accustomed to express strength by the image of an elephant, swiftness by that of a panther, courage by that of a lion, would make no scruple of substituting, in letters, the symbols for the ideas they had been used to represent.

Here we plainly see the origin of allegorical expression, that it arose from the ashes of hierogly-

phick§; and if to the same cause we should refer that figurative boldness of style and imagery which distinguish the oriental writings, we shall perhaps conclude more justly than if we should impute it to the superior grandeur of eastern genius.

From the same source with the verbal we are to derive the sentimental allegory, which is nothing more than a continuation of the metaphorical or symbolical expression of the several agents in an action, or the different objects in a scene.

The latter most peculiarly comes under the denomination of allegorical imagery; and in this species of allegory we include the impersonation of passions, affections, virtues, and vices, *&c.* on account of which principally the following Odes were properly termed by their Author Allegorical.

With respect to the utility of this figurative writing the same arguments that have been advanced in favour of descriptive poetry will be of weight likewise here. It is indeed from impersonation, or, as it is commonly termed, Personification, that poetical description borrows its chief powers and graces. Without the aid of this moral and intellectual painting would be flat and unanimated; and even the scenery of material objects would be dull without the introduction of fictitious life.

These observations will be most effectually illustrated by the sublime and beautiful Odes that occasioned them: in those it will appear how happily this allegorical painting may be executed by

the genuine powers of poetical genius, and they will not fail to prove its force and utility by passing through the imagination to the heart.

ODE I. TO PITY.

By Pella's bard, a magick name,
By all the griefs his thought could frame,
Receive my humble rite!
Long, Pity! let the nations view
Thy sky-worn robes of tend'rest blue,
And eyes of dewy light.

The propriety of invoking Pity through the mediation of Euripides is obvious.—That admirable poet had the keys of all the tender passions, and therefore could not but stand in the highest esteem with a writer of Mr. Collins's sensibility.—He did indeed admire him as much as Milton professedly did, and probably for the same reasons; but we do not find that he has copied him so closely as the last mentioned poet has sometimes done, and particularly in the opening of Samson Agonistes, which is an evident imitation of the following passage in the Phœnissæ;

Ηγȣ προπαροιθε θυγατερ, ὡς τυφλῳ ποδι
Οφθαλμος ει συ ναυβαταισιν αστρον ὡς
Δευρ᾽ εις το λευρον πεδιον ιχνος τιθεισ᾽ εμον,
Προβαινε.——— *Ac.* iii. *Sc.* 1.

The *eyes of dewy light* is one of the happiest strokes

of imagination, and may be ranked among those expressions which

> ———give us back, the image of the mind.

> Wild Arun too has heard thy strains,
> And Echo 'midst my native plains
> Been sooth'd with Pity's lute:
> There first the wren thy myrtles shed
> On gentlest Otway's infant head.

Sussex, in which county the Arun is a small river, had the honour of giving birth to Otway as well as Collins: both these poets, unhappily, became the objects of that pity by which their writings are distinguished. There was a similitude in their genius and in their sufferings: there was a resemblance in the misfortunes and in the dissipation of their lives; and the circumstances of their death cannot be remembered without pain.

The thought of painting in the temple of Pity the history of human misfortunes, and of drawing the scenes from the Tragick Muse, is very happy, and in every respect worthy the imagination of Collins.

ODE II. TO FEAR.

Mr. Collins, who had often determined to apply himself to dramatick poetry, seems here, with the same view, to have addressed one of the principal powers of the drama, and to implore that mighty influence she had given to the genius of Shakespeare;

Hither again thy fury deal;
Teach me but once like him to feel:
His cypress wreath my meed decree,
And I, O Fear! will dwell with thee.

In the construction of this nervous ode the Author has shewn equal power of judgment and imagination. Nothing can be more striking than the violent and abrupt abbreviation of the measure in the fifth and sixth verses, when he feels the strong influences of the power he invokes;

Ah, Fear! ah, frantick Fear!
I see, I see thee near!

The editor of these poems has met with nothing in the same species of poetry, either in his own or in any other language, equal in all respects, to the following description of Danger;

Danger, whose limbs of giant mold
What mortal eye can fix'd behold?
Who stalks his round, an hideous form!
Howling amidst the midnight storm,
Or throws him on the ridgy steep
Of some loose hanging rock to sleep.

It is impossible to contemplate the image conveyed in the two last verses without those emotions of terror it was intended to excite. It has, moreover, the entire advantage of novelty to recommend it; for there is too much originality in all the circumstances to suppose that the Author had in his eye that

description of the penal situation of Catiline in the ninth Æneid;

———Te, Catilina, minaci
Pendentem scopulo———

The archetype of the English poet's idea was in Nature, and probably to her alone he was indebted for the thought: from her, likewise, he derived that magnificence of conception, that horrible grandeur of imagery, displayed in the following lines;

And those, the fiends who, near ally'd,
O'er Nature's wounds and wrecks preside;
While Vengeance in the lurid air
Lifts her red arm, expos'd and bare;
On whom that rav'ning brood of Fate
Who lap the blood of Sorrow wait.

That nutritive enthusiasm which cherishes the seeds of poetry, and which is indeed the only soil wherein they will grow to perfection, lays open the mind to all the influences of fiction. A passion for whatever is greatly wild or magnificent in the works of Nature seduces the imagination to attend to all that is extravagant, however unnatural. Milton was notoriously fond of high romance and Gothic *diableries*; and Collins, who in genius and enthusiasm bore no very distant resemblance to Milton, was wholly carried away by the same attachments;

Be mine to read the visions old
Which thy awak'ning bards have told;
And lest thou meet my blasted view,
Hold each strange tale devoutly true.

On that thrice hallow'd eve, &c.] There is an old traditionary superstition, that on St. Mark's eve the forms of all such persons as shall die within the ensuing year make their solemn entry into the churches of their respective parishes, as St. Patrick swam over the Channel, without their heads.

ODE III. TO SIMPLICITY.

THE measure of the ancient ballad seems to have been made choice of for this ode on account of the subject; and it has indeed an air of Simplicity not altogether unaffecting;

> By all the honey'd store
> On Hybla's thymy shore;
> By all her blooms and mingled murmurs dear;
> By her whose love-lorn woe
> In ev'ning musings slow
> Sooth'd sweetly sad Electra's poet's ear.

This allegorical imagery of the honey'd store, the blooms and mingled murmurs of Hybla alluding to the sweetness and beauty of the Attic poetry, has the finest and the happiest effect; yet possibly it will bear a question whether the ancient Greek tragedians had a general claim to Simplicity in any thing more than the plans of their drama. Their language at least was infinitely metaphorical; yet it must be owned that they justly copied nature and the passions, and so far certainly they were entitled to the palm of true Simplicity: the following most

beautiful speech of Polynices will be a monument of this so long as poetry shall last;

> ———πολυδακρυς δ' αφικομην
> Χρονιος ιδων μελαθρα, και βωμους θεων,
> Γυμνασια θ' οισιν ενετραφην, Διρκης θ' ὑδωρ.
> Ων ου δικαιως απελαθεις, ξενην πολιν
> Ναιω, δι' οσσων ομμ' εχων δακρυρροουν.
> Αλλ' (εκ γαρ αλγους αλγος) αυ σε δερκομαι,
> Καρα ξυρηκες, και πεπλους μελαγχιμους
> Εχουσαν. EURIP. Phœniss. ver. 369.

> But staid to sing alone
> To one distinguish'd throne.

The poet cuts off the prevalence of Simplicity among the Romans with the reign of Augustus; and indeed it did not continue much longer, most of the compositions after that date giving into false and artificial ornament;

> No more in hall or bow'r
> The Passions own thy pow'r;
> Love, only love, her forceless numbers mean.

In these lines the writings of the Provencial poets are principally alluded to, in which Simplicity is generally sacrificed to the rhapsodies of romantick love.

ODE IV.

ON THE POETICAL CHARACTER.

Procul! O! procul este profani!

THIS ode is so infinitely abstracted, and replete with high enthusiasm, that it will find few readers

capable of entering into the spirit of it, or of relishing its beauties. There is a style of sentiment as utterly unintelligible to common capacities as if the subject were treated in an unknown language; and it is on the same account that abstracted poetry will never have many admirers. The authors of such poems must be content with the approbation of those heaven-favoured geniuses who, by a similarity of taste and sentiment, are enabled to penetrate the high mysteries of inspired fancy, and to pursue the loftiest flights of enthusiastick imagination. Nevertheless the praise of the distinguished few is certainly preferable to the applause of the undiscerning million; for all praise is valuable in proportion to the judgment of those who confer it.

As the subject of this ode is uncommon, so are the style and expression highly metaphorical and abstracted; thus the sun is called "the rich-hair'd "youth of Morn;" the ideas are termed "the "shadowy tribes of Mind," *&c.* We are struck with the propriety of this mode of expression here, and it affords us new proofs of the analogy that subsists between language and sentiment.

Nothing can be more loftily imagined than the creation of the cestus of Fancy in this ode: the allegorical imagery is rich and sublime; and the observation that the dangerous passions kept aloof during the operation is founded on the strictest philosophical truth; for poetical fancy can exist only in minds that are perfectly serene, and in

some measure abstracted from the influences of sense.

The scene of Milton's "inspiring hour" is perfectly in character, and described with all those wild-wood appearances of which the great poet was so enthusiastically fond;

> I view that oak the fancy'd glades among,
> By which as Milton lay, his ev'ning ear,
> Nigh spher'd in heav'n, its native strains could hear.

ODE V. TO A LADY,

ON THE DEATH OF COLONEL CHARLES ROSS.

In the Action of Fontenoy.

Written May, 1745.

THE iambic kind of numbers in which this ode is conceived seems as well calculated for tender and plaintive subjects as for those where strength or rapidity is required.—This perhaps is owing to the repetition of the strain in the same stanza; for sorrow rejects variety, and affects an uniformity of complaint. It is needless to observe that this ode is replete with harmony, spirit, and pathos: and there surely appears no reason why the seventh and eighth stanzas should be omitted in that copy printed in Dodsley's Collection of Poems.

ODE VI.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1746.

* * * * * *

ODE VII. TO MERCY.

THE ode written in 1746, and the ode To Mercy, seem to have been written on the same occasion, *viz.* the late rebellion; the former in memory of those heroes who fell in the defence of their country; the latter to excite sentiments of compassion in favour of those unhappy and deluded wretches who became a sacrifice to publick justice.

The language and imagery of both are very beautiful; but the scene and figures described in the strophe of the ode To Mercy are exquisitely striking, and would afford a painter one of the finest subjects in the world.

ODE VIII. TO LIBERTY.

THE ancient states of Greece, perhaps the only ones in which a perfect model of Liberty ever existed, are naturally brought to view in the opening of the poem;

> Who shall awake the Spartan fife,
> And call in solemn sounds to life
> The youths whose locks divinely spreading,
> Like vernal Hyacinths in sullen hue? &c.

There is something extremely bold in the imagery of the locks of the Spartan youths, and greatly superior to that description Jocasta gives us of the hair of Polynices;

> *Βοστρυχων τε κυανοχρωτα χαιτας*
> *Πλοκαμον.*———

> What new Alcæus, fancy-blest,
> Shall sing the sword, in myrtles drest? &c.

This alludes to a fragment of Alcæus still remaining, in which the poet celebrates Harmodius and Aristogiton, who slew the tyrant Hipparchus, and thereby restored the liberty of Athens.

The fall of Rome is here most nervously described in one line;

> With heaviest sound a giant-statue fell.

The thought seems altogether new, and the imitative harmony in the structure of the verse is admirable.

After bewailing the ruin of ancient Liberty, the Poet considers the influence it has retained, or still retains among the Moderns; and here the free republicks of Italy naturally engage his attention.— Florence, indeed, only to be lamented on the account of losing its liberty under those patrons of letters, the Medicean family; the jealous Pisa, justly so called in respect to its long impatience and regret under the same yoke; and the small Marino, which, however unrespectable with regard to power or extent of territory, has at least this distinction to boast, that it has preserved its Liberty longer than any other state ancient or modern, having, without any revolution, retained its present mode of government near 1400 years. Moreover, the patron-saint who founded it, and from whom it takes its name, deserves this poetical record, as he is perhaps the only saint that ever contributed to the establishment of freedom.

> Nor e'er her former pride relate
> To sad Liguria's bleeding state.

In these lines the Poet alludes to those ravages in the state of Genoa occasioned by the unhappy divisions of the Guelphs and Gibelines.

——When the favour'd of thy choice,
The daring archer, heard thy voice.

For an account of the celebrated event referred to in these verses, see Voltaire's Epistle to the King of Prussia.

Those whom the rod of Alva bruis'd,
Whose crown a British queen refus'd.

The Flemings were so dreadfully oppressed by this sanguinary general of Philip II. that they offered their sovereignty to Elizabeth, but, happily for her subjects, she had policy and magnanimity enough to refuse it. Desormeaux, in his *Abrégé Chronologique de l'Histoire d'Espagne*, thus describes the sufferings of the Flemings: "Le Duc d'Albe "achevoit de réduire les Flamands au désespoir. "Après avoir inondé les echafauts du sang le plus "noble et le plus précieux, il fasoit construire des "citadelles en divers endroits, et vouloit établir "l'Alcavala, ce tribute onéreux qui avoit été long-"tems en usage parmi les Espagnols." *Abreg. Chron. Tom. IV.*

Mona,———
Where thousand elfin shapes abide.

Mona is properly the Roman name of the Isle of Anglesey, anciently so famous for its Druids; but sometimes, as in this place, it is given to the Isle

of Man. Both those isles still retain much of the genius of superstition, and are now the only places where there is the least chance of finding a Fairy.

ODE IX. TO EVENING.

The blank ode has for some time solicited admission into the English poetry, but its efforts hitherto seem to have been vain, at least its reception has been no more than partial. It remains a question, then, whether there is not something in the nature of blank verse less adapted to the lyrick than to the heroick measure, since though it has been generally received in the latter, it is yet unadopted in the former. In order to discover this we are to consider the different modes of these different species of poetry. That of the heroick is uniform, that of the lyrick is various; and in these circumstances of uniformity and variety probably lies the cause why blank verse has been successful in the one, and unacceptable in the other. While it presented itself only in one form it was familiarized to the ear by custom; but where it was obliged to assume the different shapes of the lyrick Muse, it seemed still a stranger of uncouth figure, was received rather with curiosity than pleasure, and entertained without that ease or satisfaction which acquaintance and familiarity produce.—Moreover, the heroick blank verse obtained a sanction of infinite importance to

its general reception when it was adopted by one of the greatest poets the world ever produced, and was made the vehicle of the noblest poem that ever was written. When this poem at length extorted that applause which ignorance and prejudice had united to withhold, the versification soon found its imitators, and became more generally successful than even in those countries from whence it was imported. But lyrick blank verse has met with no such advantages; for Mr. Collins, whose genius and judgment in harmony might have given it so powerful an effect, hath left us but one specimen of it in the Ode to Evening.

In the choice of his measure he seems to have had in his eye Horace's Ode to Pyrrha; for this ode bears the nearest resemblance to that mixt kind of the asclepiad and pherecratic verse; and that resemblance in some degree reconciles us to the want of rhyme, while it reminds us of those great masters of antiquity whose works had no need of this whimsical gingle of sounds.

From the following passage one might be induced to think that the Poet had it in view to render his subject and his versification suitable to each other on this occasion, and that when he addressed himself to the sober power of Evening, he had thought proper to lay aside the foppery of rhyme;

> Now teach me, Maid compos'd!
> To breathe some soften'd strain,
> Whose numbers stealing thro' thy dark'ning vale

May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As musing slow I hail
Thy genial lov'd return.

But whatever were the numbers or the versification of this ode, the imagery and enthusiasm it contains could not fail of rendering it delightful: no other of Mr. Collins's odes is more generally characteristick of his genius: in one place we discover his passion for visionary beings;

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours and Elves,
Who slept in buds the day,
And many a Nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the fresh'ning dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car.

In another we behold his strong bias to melancholy;

Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene,
Or find some ruin 'midst its dreary dells,
Whose walls more awful nod
By thy religious gleams.

Then appears his taste for what is wildly grand and magnificent in nature; when, prevented by storms from enjoying his evening walk, he wishes for a situation

That from the mountain's sides
Views wilds and swelling floods;

and through the whole his invariable attachment to the expression of painting;

> ——and marks o'er all
> Thy dewy fingers draw
> The gradual dusky veil.

It might be a sufficient encomium on this beautiful ode to observe, that it has been particularly admired by a lady to whom Nature has given the most perfect principles of taste. She has not even complained of the want of rhyme in it, a circumstance by no means unfavourable to the cause of lyrick blank verse; for surely if a fair reader can endure an ode without bells and chimes, the masculine genius may dispense with them.

ODE X. TO PEACE.

* * * * * *

ODE XI. THE MANNERS.

FROM the subject and sentiments of this ode, it seems not improbable that the Author wrote it about the time when he left the university; when, weary with the pursuit of academical studies, he no longer confined himself to the search of theoretical knowledge, but commenced the scholar of humanity, to study Nature in her works, and man in society.

The following farewell to Science exhibits a very just as well as striking picture; for however exalted in theory the Platonic doctrines may appear, it is certain that Platonism and Pyrrhonism are nearly allied;

Farewell the Porch whose roof is seen
Arch'd with th' enliv'ning olive's green;
Where Science, prank'd in tissu'd vest,
By Reason, Pride, and Fancy drest,
Comes like a bride, so trim array'd,
To wed with Doubt in Plato's shade.

When the mind goes in pursuit of visionary systems it is not far from the regions of doubt; and the greater its capacity to think abstractedly, to reason and refine, the more it will be exposed to and bewildered in uncertainty. From an enthusiastick warmth of temper, indeed, we may for a while be encouraged to persist in some favourite doctrine, or to adhere to some adopted system; but when that enthusiasm which is founded on the vivacity of the passions gradually cools and dies away with them, the opinions it supported drop from us, and we are thrown upon the inhospitable shore of doubt—A striking proof of the necessity of some moral rule of wisdom and virtue, and some system of happiness, established by unerring knowledge and unlimited power.

In the Poet's address to Humour in this ode, there is one image of singular beauty and propriety. The ornaments in the hair of Wit are of such a nature, and disposed in such a manner, as to be perfectly symbolical and characteristick;

Me too amidst thy band admit,
There where the young-ey'd healthful Wit,
(Whose jewels in his crisped hair
Are plac'd each others beams to share,
Whom no delights from thee divide)
In laughter loos'd attends thy side.

Nothing could be more expressive of wit, which consists in a happy collision of comparative and relative images, than this reciprocal reflection of light from the disposition of the jewels;

> O Humour! thou whose name is known
> To Britain's favour'd isle alone.

The Author could only mean to apply this to the time when he wrote, since other nations had produced works of great humour, as he himself acknowledges afterwards;

> By old Miletus, &c.
> By all you taught the Tuscan maids, &c.

The Milesian and Tuscan romances were by no means distinguished for humour, but as they were the models of that species of writing in which humour was afterwards employed, they are probably for that reason only mentioned here.

ODE XII. THE PASSIONS.

If the Musick which was composed for this ode had equal merit with the ode itself, it must have been the most excellent performance of the kind in which Poetry and Musick have, in modern times, united. Other pieces of the same nature have derived their greatest reputation from the perfection of the Musick that accompanied them, having in themselves little more merit than that of an ordinary ballad; but in this we have the whole soul and power of poetry—expression that, even without the aid of Musick, strikes to the heart; and imagery of power

enough to transport the attention, without the forceful alliance of corresponding sounds: what, then, must have been the effect of these united!

It is very observable, that though the measure is the same in which the musical efforts of Fear, Anger, and Despair, are described, yet by the variation of the cadence the character and operation of each is strongly expressed; thus particularly of Despair;

With woeful measures wan Despair——
Low sullen sounds his grief beguil'd;
A solemn, strange, and mingled air!
'Twas sad by fits, by starts it was wild.

He must be a very unskilful composer who could not catch the power of imitative harmony from these lines.

The picture of Hope, that follows this is beautiful almost beyond imitation. By the united powers of imagery and harmony, that delightful being is exhibited with all the charms and graces that pleasure and fancy have appropriated to her;

Relegat, qui semel percurrit;
Qui nunquam legit, legat.

But thou, O Hope! with eyes so fair,
What was thy delighted measure?
Still it whisper'd promis'd pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!
Still would her touch the strain prolong,
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She call'd on Echo still thro' all the song;
And where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at every close;
And Hope enchanted smil'd, and wav'd her golden hair.

In what an exalted light does the above stanza place this great master of poetical imagery and harmony! what varied sweetness of numbers! what delicacy of judgment and expression! How characteristically does Hope prolong her strain! repeat her soothing closes! call upon her associate Echo for the same purposes! and display every pleasing grace peculiar to her!

And Hope enchanted smil'd, and wav'd her golden hair,

Legat, qui nunquam legit;
Qui semel percurrit, relegat.

The descriptions of Joy, Jealousy, and Revenge, are excellent, though not equally so: those of Melancholy and Cheerfulness are superior to every thing of the kind: and upon the whole, there may be very little hazard in asserting that this is the finest ode in the English language.

ODE XIII. ON THOMSON'S DEATH.

THE Ode on the death of Thomson seems to have been written in an excursion to Richmond by water. The rural scenery has a proper effect in an ode to the memory of a poet much of whose merit lay in descriptions of the same kind, and the appellations of *Druid* and *meek Nature's Child* are happily characteristick. For the better understanding of this ode, it is necessary to remember that Mr. Thomson lies buried in the church of Richmond.

ODES

DESCRIPTIVE AND ALLEGORICAL.

ODE I. TO PITY.

O THOU! the friend of man, assign'd
With balmy hands his wounds to bind,
And charm his frantick woe,
When first Distress, with dagger keen,
Broke forth to waste his destin'd scene,
His wild unsated foe!

By Pella's Bard, a magick name!
By all the griefs his thought could frame,
Receive my humble rite!
Long, Pity! let the nations view
Thy sky-worn robes of tend'rest blue,
And eyes of dewy light.

But wherefore need I wander wide
To old Ilissus' distant side?
Deserted stream and mute!
Wild Arun* too has heard thy strains,
And Echo 'midst my native plains
Been sooth'd by Pity's lute:

* A river in Sussex.

There first the wren thy myrtles shed
On gentlest Otway's infant head;
To him thy cell was shown;
And while he sung the female heart,
With youth's soft notes unspoil'd by art,
Thy turtles mix'd their own.

Come, Pity! come; by Fancy's aid
Ev'n now my thoughts, relenting Maid!
Thy temple's pride design:
Its southern site, its truth complete,
Shall raise a wild enthusiast heat
In all who view the shrine.

There Picture's toil shall well relate
How Chance or hard involving Fate
O'er mortal bliss prevail:
The buskin'd Muse shall near her stand,
And, sighing, prompt her tender hand
With each disastrous tale.

There let me oft', retir'd by day,
In dreams of passion melt away,
Allow'd with thee to dwell;
There waste the mournful lamp of night,
Till, Virgin! thou again delight
To hear a British shell.

ODE II. TO FEAR.

Thou! to whom the world unknown
With all its shadowy shapes is shown;
Who seest appall'd th' unreal scene,
While Fancy lifts the veil between;
Ah, Fear! ah, frantick Fear!
I see, I see thee near!
I know thy hurry'd step, thy haggard eye!
Like thee I start, like thee disorder'd fly,
For lo! what monsters in thy train appear!
Danger, whose limbs of giant mould
What mortal eye can fix'd behold?
Who stalks his round, an hideous form!
Howling amidst the midnight storm,
Or throws him on a ridgy steep
Of some loose hanging rock to sleep;
And with him thousand phantoms join'd,
Who prompt to deeds accurs'd the mind;
And those, the fiends who, near ally'd,
O'er Nature's wounds and wrecks preside;
While Vengeance in the lurid air
Lifts her red arm, expos'd and bare;
On whom that rav'ning brood of Fate
Who lap the blood of Sorrow wait.
Who, Fear! this ghastly train can see
And look not madly wild like thee?

EPODE.

In earliest Greece to thee with partial choice
The grief-full Muse address'd her infant tongue;
The maids and matrons on her awful voice,
Silent and pale, in wild amazement hung.

Yet he, the bard * who first invok'd thy name,
Disdain'd in Marathon its power to feel;
For not alone he nurs'd the poet's flame,
But reach'd from Virtue's hand the patriot's steel.

But who is he whom later garlands grace,
Who, left a while o'er Hybla's dews to rove,
With trembling eyes thy dreary steps we trace,
Where thou and Furies shar'd the baleful grove?

Wrapp'd in thy cloudy veil th' incestuous queen †
Sigh'd the sad call her son and husband heard,
When once alone it broke the silent scene,
And he the wretch of Thebes no more appear'd.

O Fear! I know thee by my throbbing heart;
Thy with'ring pow'r inspir'd each mournful line:
Tho' gentle Pity claim her mingled part,
Yet all the thunders of the scene are thine.

* Æschylus. † Jocasta.

ANTISTROPHE.

Thou who such weary lengths hast past,
Where wilt thou rest, mad Nymph! at last?
Say, wilt thou shroud in haunted cell,
Where gloomy Rape and Murder dwell?
Or in some hallow'd seat,
'Gainst which the big waves beat,
Hear drowning seamen's cries, in tempests brought?
Dark Power! with shudd'ring meek submitted thought
Be mine to read the visions old
Which thy awak'ning bards have told.
And lest thou meet my blasted view,
Hold each strange tale devoutly true.
Ne'er be I found by thee o'er-aw'd
In that thrice-hallow'd eve abroad
When ghosts, as cottage-maids believe,
Their pebbled beds permitted leave,
And goblins haunt from fire or fen,
Or mine or flood, the walks of men!
O Thou! whose spirit most possest
The sacred seat of Shakespeare's breast;
By all that from thy prophet broke,
In thy divine emotions spoke,
Hither again thy fury deal;
Teach me but once like him to feel:
His cypress wreath my meed decree,
And I, O Fear! will dwell with thee.

ODE III. TO SIMPLICITY.

O THOU! by Nature taught
To breathe her genuine thought
In numbers warmly pure and sweetly strong;
Who first on mountains wild,
In fancy loveliest child,
Thy babe and Pleasure's, nurs'd the powers of song!

Thou! who with hermit heart
Disdain'd the wealth of art,
And gauds, and pageant weeds, and trailing pall,
But com'st a decent maid,
In Attic robe array'd,
O chaste unboastful Nymph! to thee I call.

By all the honey'd store
On Hybla's thymy shore;
By all her blooms and mingled murmurs dear;
By her whose love-lorn woe
In ev'ning musings slow
Sooth'd sweetly sad Electra's poet's ear;

By old Cephisus deep,
Who spreads his wavy sweep
In warbled wand'rings round thy green retreat,
On whose enamell'd side,
When holy Freedom dy'd,
No equal haunt allur'd thy future feet;

O sister meek of Truth!
To my admiring youth
Thy sober aid and native charms infuse.
The flow'rs that sweetest breathe,
Tho' Beauty cull'd the wreathe,
Still ask thy hand to range their order'd hues.

While Rome could none esteem
But virtue's patriot theme,
You lov'd her hills, and led her laureat band;
But stay'd to sing alone
To one distinguish'd throne,
And turn'd thy face, and fled her alter'd land.

No more in hall or bow'r
The passions own thy pow'r;
Love, only love, her forceless numbers mean:
For thou hast left her shrine,
Nor olive more nor vine
Shall gain thy feet to bless the servile scene.

Tho' taste, tho' genius, bless
To some divine excess,
Faint's the cold work till thou inspire the whole:
What each, what all, supply
May court, may charm, our eye;
Thou, only thou, canst raise the meeting soul!

Of these let others ask
To aid some mighty task;

I only seek to find thy temp'rate vale,
Where oft my reed might sound
To maids and shepherds round,
And all thy sons, O Nature! learn my tale.

ODE IV.

ON THE POETICAL CHARACTER.

As once, if not with light regard,
I read aright that gifted bard,
(Him whose school above the rest
His loveliest Elfin queen has blest)
One, only one, unrivall'd fair *,
Might hope the magick girdle wear,
At solemn tournay hung on high,
The wish of each love-darting eye:
Lo! to each other nymph in turn apply'd,
As if in air unseen, some hov'ring hand,
Some chaste and angel-friend to virgin-fame,
With whisper'd spell had burst the starting band,
It left unbless'd her loath'd dishonour'd side:
Happier, hopeless Fair! if never
Her baffled hand with vain endeavour
Had touch'd that fatal zone, so her deny'd.
Young Fancy thus, to me divinest name!
To whom, prepar'd and bath'd in heaven,
The cest of amplest power is given,

* Florimel. See Spenser, Leg. 4.

To few the godlike gift assigns
To gird their blest prophetick loins,
And gaze her visions wild, and feel unmix'd her [flame.
The band, as Fairy legends say,
Was wove on that creating day
When he who call'd with thought to birth
Yon' tented sky, this laughing earth,
And drest with springs and forests tall,
And pour'd the main engirting all,
Long by the lov'd enthusiast wood,
Himself in some diviner mood
Retiring, sat with her alone,
And plac'd her on his sapphire throne,
The whiles the vaulted shrine around
Seraphick wires were heard to sound,
Now sublimest triumph swelling,
Now on love and mercy dwelling;
And she from out the veiling cloud
Breath'd her magick notes aloud;
And thou, thou rich-hair'd youth of Morn!
And all thy subject life was born.
The dang'rous Passions kept aloof
Far from the sainted growing woof;
But near it sat ecstatick Wonder,
List'ning the deep applauding thunder;
And Truth, in sunny vest array'd,
By whose the tarsel's eyes were made;
All the shadowy tribes of Mind,
In braided dance their murmurs join'd,

And all the bright uncounted pow'rs
Who feed on heaven's ambrosial flow'rs.
Where is the bard whose soul can now
Its high presuming hopes avow?
Where he who thinks with rapture blind,
This hallow'd work for him design'd?
High on some cliff, to heav'n up-pil'd,
Of rude access, of prospect wild,
Where tangled round the jealous steep
Strange shades o'erbrow the vallies deep,
And holy Genii guard the rock,
Its glooms embrown, its springs unlock,
While on its rich ambitious head
An Eden like his own lies spread.
I view that oak the fancy'd glades among,
By which as Milton lay, his ev'ning ear,
From many a cloud that dropp'd ethereal dew,
Nigh spher'd in heav'n, its native strains could hear,
On which that ancient trump he reach'd was hung;
Thither oft' his glory greeting,
From Waller's myrtle shades retreating,
With many a vow from Hope's aspiring tongue
My trembling feet his guiding steps pursue;
In vain—Such bliss to one alone
Of all the sons of Soul was known,
And Heav'n and Fancy, kindred pow'rs,
Have now o'erturn'd th' inspiring bow'rs,
Or curtain'd close such scene from ev'ry future view.

ODE V. TO A LADY,

ON THE DEATH OF COLONEL CHARLES ROSS

In the Action of Fontenoy.

Written May 1745.

WHILE, lost to all his former mirth,
Britannia's Genius bends to earth,
And mourns the fatal day;
While, stain'd with blood, he strives to tear
Unseemly from his sea-green hair
The wreaths of cheerful May;

The thoughts which musing Pity pays,
And fond Remembrance loves to raise,
Your faithful hours attend:
Still Fancy to herself unkind,
Awakes to grief the soften'd mind,
And points the bleeding friend.

By rapid Scheld's descending wave
His country's vows shall bless the grave
Where'er the youth is laid:
That sacred spot the village hind
With ev'ry sweetest turf shall bind,
And Peace protect the shade.

O'er him, whose doom thy Virtues grieve,
Aerial forms shall sit at eve,
And bend the pensive head;
And fall'n to save his injur'd land,
Imperial Honour's awful hand
Shall point his lonely bed.

The warlike dead of ev'ry age,
Who fill the fair recording page,
Shall leave their sainted rest;
And, half-reclining on his spear,
Each wond'ring chief by turns appear
To hail the blooming guest.

Old Edward's sons, unknown to yield,
Shall crowd from Cressy's laurell'd field,
And gaze with fix'd delight:
Again for Britain's wrongs they feel,
Again they snatch the gleamy steel,
And wish th' avenging fight.

But, lo! where sunk in deep despair,
Her garments torn, her bosom bare,
Impatient Freedom lies!
Her matted tresses madly spread,
To ev'ry sod which wraps the dead
She turns her joyless eyes.

Ne'er shall she leave that lowly ground
Till notes of triumph bursting round

Proclaim her reign restor'd;
Till William seek the sad retreat,
And, bleeding at her sacred feet,
Present the sated sword.

If, weak to sooth so soft an heart,
These pictur'd glories nought impart
To dry thy constant tear;
If yet, in Sorrow's distant eye,
Expos'd and pale thou seest him lie,
Wild War insulting near;

Where'er from time thou court'st relief
The Muse shall still with social grief
Her gentlest promise keep:
Ev'n humble Harting's cottag'd vale
Shall learn the sad repeated tale,
And bid her shepherds weep.

ODE VI.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1746.

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest?
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mold,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By Fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung:
There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall a while repair
To dwell a weeping hermit there.

ODE VII. TO MERCY.

STROPHE.

O THOU! who sitt'st a smiling bride
By Valour's arm'd and awful side,
Gentlest of sky-born forms, and best ador'd!
Who oft' with songs divine to hear
Winn'st from his fatal grasp the spear,
And hid'st in wreaths of flow'rs his bloodless sword;
Thou who amidst the deathful field,
By godlike chiefs alone beheld,
Oft with thy bosom bare art found,
Pleading for him, the youth who sinks to ground:
See, Mercy! see! with pure and loaded hands
Before thy shrine my country's Genius stands,
And decks thy altar still, tho' pierc'd with many
a wound.

ANTISTROPHE.

When he whom ev'n our joys provoke,
The fiend of Nature, join'd his yoke,
And rush'd in wrath to make our isle his prey,

Thy form from out thy sweet abode
O'ertook him on his blasted road,
And stopp'd his wheels, and look'd his rage away.
I see recoil his sable steeds,
That bore him swift to savage deeds;
Thy tender melting eyes they own.
O Maid! for all thy love to Britain shown,
Where Justice bars her iron tow'r,
To thee we build a roseate bow'r.
Thou, thou shalt rule our queen, and share our monarch's throne!

ODE VIII. TO LIBERTY.

STROPHE.

Who shall awake the Spartan fife,
And call in solemn sounds to life
The youths whose locks divinely spreading,
Like vernal Hyacinths in sullen hue,
At once the breath of fear and virtue shedding,
Applauding Freedom lov'd of old to view?
What new Alcæus, fancy-blest,
Shall sing the sword, in myrtles drest,
At Wisdom's shrine a while its flame concealing,
(What place so fit to seal a deed renown'd?)
Till she her brightest lightnings round revealing,
It leap'd in glory forth, and dealt her prompted wound!
O Goddess! in that feeling hour,
When most its sounds would court thy ears,

Let not my shell's misguided pow'r
E'er draw thy sad, thy mindful, tears.
No, Freedom! no; I will not tell
How Rome, before thy weeping face,
With heaviest sound a giant-statue fell,
Push'd by a wild and artless race
From off its wide ambitious base,
When Time his northern sons of spoil awoke,
And all the blended work of strength and grace,
With many a rude repeated stroke, [broke.
And many a barb'rous yell, to thousand fragments

EPODE II.

Yet ev'n where'er the least appear'd
Th' admiring world thy hand rever'd;
Still 'midst the scatter'd states around
Some remnants of her strength were found:
They saw by what escap'd the storm
How wound'rous rose her perfect form;
How in the great the labour'd whole
Each mighty master pour'd his soul:
For sunny Florence, seat of Art,
Beneath her vines preserv'd a part,
Till they whom Science lov'd to name
(O who could fear it!) quench'd her flame.
And lo! an humbler relick laid
In jealous Pisa's olive shade,
See small Marino joins the theme,
Tho' least, not last, in thy esteem.
Strike! louder strike, th' ennobling strings
To those whose merchant-sons were kings;

To him who, deck'd with pearly pride,
In Adria weds his green-hair'd bride.
Hail! port of glory, wealth, and pleasure!
Ne'er let me change this Lydian measure,
Nor e'er her former pride relate
To sad Liguria's bleeding state.
Ah! no; more pleas'd thy haunts I seek
On wild Helvetia's mountains bleak,
(Where when the favour'd of thy choice,
The daring archer heard thy voice,
Forth from his eyry, rouz'd in dread,
The rav'ning Eagle northward fled)
Or dwell in willow'd meads more near,
With those to whom thy Stork is dear*,
Those whom the rod of Alva bruis'd,
Whose crown a British queen refus'd.
The magick works, thou feel'st the strains,
One holier name alone remains;
The perfect spell shall then avail,
Hail, Nymph! ador'd by Britain, hail!

ANTISTROPHE.

Beyond the measure vast of thought
The works the wizard Time has wrought!

* The Dutch, amongst whom there are very severe penalties for those who are convicted of killing this bird. They are kept tame in almost all their towns, and particularly at the Hague, of the arms of which they make a part. The common people of Holland are said to entertain a superstitious sentiment, that if the whole species of them should become extinct they should lose their liberties.

The Gaul, it is held of antique story,
Saw Britain link'd to his now adverse strand*;
No sea between, nor cliff sublime and hoary,
He pass'd with unwet feet thro' all our land.
To the blown Baltick then, they say,
The wild waves found another way,
Where Orcas howls, his wolfish mountains rounding;
Till all the banded west at once 'gan rise,
A wide wild storm ev'n Nature's self-confounding,
With'ring her giant sons with strange uncouth surprise.
This pillar'd earth, so firm and wide,
By winds and inward labours torn,
In thunders dread was push'd aside,
And down the should'ring billows borne.
And see! like gems her laughing train,
The little isles on ev'ry side,
Mona †, once hid from those who search the main,

* This tradition is mentioned by several of our old historians. Some naturalists too have endeavoured to support the probability of the fact by arguments drawn from the correspondent disposition of the two opposite coasts. I do not remember that any poetical use has been hitherto made of it.

† There is a tradition in the Isle of Man, that a mermaid becoming enamoured of a young man of extraordinary beauty, took an opportunity of meeting him one day as he walked on the shore, and opened her passion to him, but was received with a coldness, occasioned by his horrour and surprise at her appearance. This however was so misconstrued by the sea-lady, that in revenge for this treatment of her she punished the whole island by cover-

Where thousand elfin shapes abide,
And wight who checks the west'ring tide,
For thee consenting Heav'n has each bestow'd,
A fair attendant on her sov'reign pride;
To thee this blest divorce she ow'd,
For thou hast made her vales thy lov'd thy last abode!

SECOND EPODE.

Then too, it is said, an hoary pile
'Midst the green navel of our isle,
Thy shrine in some religious wood,
O soul-enforcing Goddess! stood;
There oft' the painted native's feet
Were wont thy form celestial meet;
Tho' now with hopeless toil we trace
Time's backward rolls to find its place;
Whether the fiery-tressed Dane
Or Roman's self o'erturn'd the fane,
Or in what Heav'n-left age it fell,
'Twere hard for modern song to tell:
Yet still if truth those beams infuse
Which guide at once and charm the Muse,
Beyond yon' braided clouds that lie
Paving the light embroider'd sky,
Amidst the bright pavilion'd plains
The beauteous model still remains:

ing it with a mist; so that all who attempted to carry on any commerce with it either never arrived at it, but wandered up and down the sea, or were on a sudden wrecked upon its cliffs.

There happier than in islands bless'd,
Or bow'rs by Spring or Hebe dress'd,
The chiefs who fill our Albion's story
In warlike weeds retir'd in glory,
Hear their consorted Druids sing
Their triumphs to th' immortal string.
How may the poet now unfold,
What never tongue or numbers told,
How learn, delighted and amaz'd,
What hands unknown that fabrick rais'd?
Ev'n now before his favour'd eyes
In Gothick pride it seems to rise!
Yet Grecia's graceful orders join
Majestick thro' the mix'd design:
The secret builder knew to chuse
Each sphere-found gem of richest hues;
Whate'er heav'n's purer mould contains
When nearer suns emblaze its veins:
There on the walls the patriot's sight
May ever hang with fresh delight,
And, grav'd with some prophetick rage,
Read Albion's fame thro' ev'ry age.
Ye Forms Divine! ye Laureate Band!
That near her inmost altar stand,
Now sooth her, to her blissful train
Blithe Concord's social form to gain;
Concord! whose myrtle wand can steep
Ev'n Anger's blood-shot eyes in sleep;
Before whose breathing bosom's balm
Rage drops his steel and storms grow calm:

Her let our sires and matrons hoar
Welcome to Britain's ravag'd shore,
Our youths, enamour'd of the fair,
Play with the tangles of her hair,
Till in one loud applauding sound
The nations shout to her around,
O! how supremely art thou blest!
Thou, Lady! thou shalt rule the West!

ODE IX. TO EVENING.

If aught of oaten stop or past'ral song
May hope, chaste Eve! to sooth thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs and dying gales;

O Nymph reserv'd! while now the bright-hair'd Sun
Sits in yon' western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed;

Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-ey'd bat
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft' he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum;
Now teach me, Maid compos'd!
To breathe some soften'd strain,

Whose numbers stealing thro' thy dark'ning vale
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As musing slow I hail
Thy genial lov'd return:

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours and Elves,
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a Nymph, who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the fresh'ning dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car:

Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene,
Or find some ruin 'midst its dreary dells,
Whose walls more awful nod
By thy religious gleams:

Or if chill blust'ring winds or driving rain
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut
That from the mountain's sides
Views wilds and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discover'd spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his show'rs, as oft' he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy ling'ring light;

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves,
Or Winter, yelling thro' the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, smiling Peace,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And love thy favourite name!

ODE X. TO PEACE.

O THOU! who bad'st thy turtles bear
Swift from his grasp thy golden hair,
And sought'st thy native skies;
When War, by vultures drawn from far,
To Britain bent his iron car,
And bade his storms arise:

Tir'd of his rude tyrannick sway
Our youth shall fix some festive day
His sullen shrines to burn:
But thou, who hear'st the turning spheres,
What sounds may charm thy partial ears,
And gain thy bless'd return?

O Peace! thy injur'd robes up-bind;
O rise, and leave not one behind
Of all thy beamy train!
The British Lion, Goddess sweet!
Lies stretch'd on earth to kiss thy feet,
And own thy holier reign.

Let others court thy transient smile,
But come to grace thy Western Isle,
By warlike Honour led;
And while around her ports rejoice,
While all her sons adore thy choice,
With him for ever wed.

ODE XI. THE MANNERS.

FAREWELL, for clearer ken design'd,
The dim-discover'd tracks of mind,
Truths which, from action's paths retir'd,
My silent search in vain requir'd.
No more my sail that deep explores,
No more I search those magick shores,
What regions part the world of soul,
Or whence thy streams, Opinion, roll:
If e'er I round such Fairy field,
Some pow'r impart the spear and shield
At which the wizard Passions fly,
By which the giant Follies die!
  Farewell the Porch whose roof is seen
Arch'd with th' enliv'ning olive's green;
Where Science, prank'd in tissu'd vest,
By Reason, Pride, and Fancy, drest,
Comes like a bride, so trim array'd,
To wed with Doubt in Plato's shade!
  Youth of the quick uncheated sight
Thy walks, Observance, more invite.
O thou! who lov'st that ampler range
Where Life's wide prospects round thee change,
And with her mingled sons ally'd
Throw'st the prattling page aside,
To me in converse sweet impart,
To read in man the native heart;

To learn, where Science sure is found,
From Nature as she lives around,
And gazing oft' her mirror true,
By turns each shifting image view,
Till meddling Art's officious lore
Reverse the lessons taught before,
Alluring from a safer rule
To dream in her enchanted school.
Thou, Heaven! whate'er of great we boast,
Hast blest this social science most.
Retiring hence to thoughtful cell,
As Fancy breathes her potent spell,
Not vain she finds the charmful task
In pageant quaint, in motley mask.
Behold! before her musing eyes
The countless Manners round her rise,
While, ever varying as they pass,
To some Contempt applies her glass:
With these the white-rob'd Maids combine,
And those the laughing Satyrs join.
But who is he whom now she views
In robe of wild contending hues?
Thou by the Passions nurs'd, I greet
The comick sock that binds thy feet!
O Humour! thou whose name is known
To Britain's favour'd isle alone,
Me too amidst thy band admit,
There where the young-ey'd healthful Wit,
(Whose jewels in his crisped hair
Are plac'd each other's beams to share,

Whom no delights from thee divide)
In laughter loos'd attends thy side.
By old Miletus *, who so long
Has ceas'd his love-inwoven song;
By all you taught the Tuscan maids
In chang'd Italia's modern shades;
By him whose Knight's distinguish'd name †
Refin'd a nation's lust of fame,
Whose tales ev'n now with echoes sweet
Castilia's Moorish hills repeat;
Or him whom Seine's blue nymphs deplore ‡
In watchet weeds on Gallia's shore,
Who drew the sad Sicilian maid
By virtues in her sire betray'd:
O Nature boon! from whom proceed
Each forceful thought, each prompted deed,
If but from thee I hope to feel,
On all my heart imprint thy seal!
Let some retreating Cynick find
Those oft'-turn'd scrolls I leave behind;
The Sports and I this hour agree
To rove thy scene-full world with thee!

* Alluding to the Milesian Tales, some of the earliest romances.

† Cervantes.

‡ Monsieur Le Sage, author of the incomparable Adventures of Gil Blas de Santillane, who died in Paris in the year 1745.

ODE XII. THE PASSIONS.

AN ODE FOR MUSICK.

When Musick, heavenly Maid! was young,
While yet in early Greece she sung,
The Passions oft', to hear her shell,
Throng'd around her magick cell;
Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
Possess'd beyond the Muse's painting,
By turns they felt the glowing mind
Disturb'd, delighted, rais'd, refin'd;
Till once, it is said, when all were fir'd,
Fill'd with fury, rapt, inspir'd,
From the supporting myrtles round
They snatch'd her instruments of sound;
And as they oft' had heard apart
Sweet lessons of her forceful art,
Each, for Madness rul'd the hour,
Would prove his own expressive pow'r.

First Fear his hand, its skill to try,
Amid the chords bewilder'd laid,
And back recoil'd, he knew not why,
Ev'n at the sound himself had made.

Next Anger rush'd, his eyes on fire
In lightnings own'd his secret stings;
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
And swept with hurry'd hand the strings.

With woeful measures wan Despair—
Low sullen sounds his grief beguil'd;
A solemn, strange, and mingled air!
'Twas sad by fits, by starts it was wild.

But thou, O Hope! with eyes so fair,
What was thy delighted measure?
Still it whisper'd promis'd pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!
Still would her touch the strain prolong,
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She call'd on Echo still thro' all the song;
And where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at ev'ry close;
And Hope enchanted smil'd, and wav'd her golden hair.
And longer had she sung—but with a frown
Revenge impatient rose;
He threw his blood-stain'd sword in thunder down,
And with a withering look
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread,
Were ne'er prophetick sounds so full of woe;
And ever and anon he beat
The doubling drum with furious heat;
And tho' sometimes, each dreary pause between,
Dejected Pity at his side
Her soul-subduing voice apply'd,
Yet still he kept his wild unalter'd mien,
While each strain'd ball of sight seem'd bursting from his head,

Thy numbers, Jealousy! to nought were fix'd;
Sad proof of thy distressful state;
Of diff'ring themes the veering song was mix'd,
And now it courted Love, now raving call'd on Hate.
With eyes up-rais'd, as one inspir'd,
Pale Melancholy sat retir'd,
And from her wild sequester'd seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet,
Pour'd thro' the mellow horn her pensive soul,
And dashing soft from rocks around
Bubbling runnels join'd the sound;
Thro' glades and glooms the mingled measure stole,
Or o'er some haunted streams with fond delay,
Round an holy calm diffusing,
Love of peace and lonely musing,
In hollow murmurs dy'd away.
But, O! how alter'd was its sprightlier tone!
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,
Her bow across her shoulder flung,
Her buskins gemm'd with morning dew,
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket rung,
The hunter's call to Faun and Dryad known;
The oak-crown'd sisters, and their chaste-ey'd queen,
Satyrs and Sylvan boys were seen
Peeping from forth their alleys green;
Brown Exercise rejoic'd to hear,
And Sport leapt up, and seiz'd his beechen spear.
Last came Joy's ecstatick trial:
He, with viny crown advancing,
First to the lively pipe his hand addrest,

But soon he saw the brisk-awakening viol,
Whose sweet entrancing voice he lov'd the best.
They would have thought who heard the strain
They saw in Tempe's vale her native maids
Amidst the festal sounding shades
To some unweary'd minstrel dancing,
While as his flying fingers kiss'd the strings
Love fram'd with Mirth a gay fantastick round;
Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound,
And he, amidst his frolick play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings.
O Musick! sphere-descended maid,
Friend of Pleasure, Wisdom's aid,
Why, Goddess! why to us deny'd?
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?
As in that lov'd Athenian bow'r
You learn'd an all-commanding pow'r,
Thy mimick soul, O Nymph endear'd!
Can well recall what then it heard.
Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to virtue, fancy, art?
Arise, as in that elder time,
Warm, energick, chaste, sublime!
Thy wonders in that god-like age
Fill thy recording sister's page—
'Tis said, and I believe the tale,
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all which charms this laggard age;

Ev'n all at once together found
Cæcilia's mingled world of sound—
O bid our vain endeavours cease,
Revive the just designs of Greece;
Return in all thy simple state;
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

ODE XIII.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. THOMSON.

The Scene of the following Stanzas is supposed to lie on the Thames, near Richmond.

I.

In yonder grave a Druid lies
Where slowly winds the stealing wave;
The year's best sweets shall duteous rise
To deck its Poet's sylvan grave.

II.

In yon' deep bed of whisp'ring reeds
His airy harp * shall now be laid,
That he whose heart in sorrow bleeds
May love thro' life the soothing shade.

III.

Then maids and youths shall linger here,
And while its sounds at distance swell,
Shall sadly seem in Pity's ear
To her the woodland pilgrim's knell.

* The harp of Æolus, of which see a description in The Castle of Indolence.

IV.

Remembrance oft' shall haunt the shore
When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,
And oft' suspend the dashing oar
To bid his gentle spirit rest!

V.

And oft' as Ease and Health retire
To breezy lawn or forest deep,
The friend shall view yon' whit'ning spire *,
And 'mid the vary'd landscape weep.

VI.

But thou, who own'st that earthly bed,
Ah! what will ev'ry dirge avail?
Or tears which Love and Pity shed
That mourn beneath the gliding sail!

VII.

Yet lives there one whose heedless eye
Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimm'ring near?
With him, sweet Bard! may Fancy die,
And Joy desert the blooming year.

VIII.

But thou, lorn Stream! whose sullen tide
No sedge-crown'd sisters now attend,
Now waft me from the green hill's side
Whose cold turf hides the bury'd friend!

IX.

And see! the Fairy vallies fade,
Dun Night has veil'd the solemn view!

* Richmond church, in which Mr. Thomson was buried.

Yet once again, dear parted Shade!
Meek Nature's Child! again adieu.

X.

The genial meads assign'd to bless
Thy life shall mourn thy early doom *!
Their hinds and shepherd-girls shall dress
With simple hands thy rural tomb.

XI.

Long, long, thy stone and pointed clay
Shall melt the musing Briton's eyes;
O Vales! and wild Woods! shall he say,
In yonder grave your Druid lies!

* Mr. Thomson resided in the neighbourhood of Richmond some time before his death.

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THE END.